

Commentary on the Catholic Epistles of Peter
By Oecumenius (6th Century)

Translated by John Litteral

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INTRODUCTION

Oecumenius has been one of my favorite Bible commentators for decades. I remember twenty years ago when I first read the English translation of his commentary on the book of Revelation that I admired the way that he explained and interpreted the words of Scripture. After all of these years I was disappointed to learn that other commentaries by Oecumenius have never been translated into English nor published, with the exception of excerpts that can be found in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Sacred Scripture series. I plan to change that, starting with the commentaries by Oecumenius on the Epistle of James and 1-2 Peter.

When it comes to the identity of Oecumenius, there are different conclusions that scholars have come to. Not only about who he was, but when he wrote his commentaries, and which ones are actually his, and which ones are not. There have been manuscript discoveries of his commentary on Revelation that have given evidence that the author of that commentary on Revelation wrote in the seventh century, perhaps very early 600's. Some think that Oecumenius lived in the sixth and seventh centuries. Not all scholars agree that the Oecumenius who wrote that commentary on Revelation is the same Oecumenius who wrote the other commentaries on the New Testament, but some do think it is the one and same Oecumenius.

It has been thought for a long time that Oecumenius was bishop of Tricca in ancient Thessaly. Others think he was a lay person from Isauria in Asia Minor. Herman Charles (H.C.) Hoskier, who published the first critical Greek text of the commentary on Revelation by Oecumenius had this to say...

It is, therefore, not inappropriate to bring to public attention the text and commentary of OECUMENIUS, who flourished in the sixth and seventh centuries, and whose commentary on the Apocalypse has been missing for a long period, although some of his commentaries on other New Testament books have come down to us. Attributed generally to the tenth century, the document which we now publish itself gives us the correct date (preceding Andreas 563–614 A.D. and Arethas 860-939 A.D.), and we can now place Oecumenius, Greek Bishop of Tricca, towards the beginning of the seventh century.¹

While H.C Hoskier and some others believed that the same Oecumenius who wrote the commentary on Revelation is the same one who wrote the other New Testament commentaries, others, such as William C. Weinrich does not think it is the same Oecumenius...

Questions concerning the identity, date and provenance and literary output of Oecumenius continue to elicit various conclusions. In 1532 Donatus Veronensis published under the name of Oecumenius commentaries on the book of Acts, the seven Catholic Epistles and the letters of Paul. Although some scholia from the commentary on the Pauline epistles may be authentic to Oecumenius, the remainder of these commentaries have been demonstrated to be falsely ascribed to him.²

In my opinion, it is probably the same Oecumenius who is responsible for the commentary on the book of Revelation and the commentaries on the entire New Testament with the exception of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). His commentaries on the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's Epistles relied heavily upon the homilies by John Chrysostom and other writings from the Early Church Fathers that preceded Oecumenius, so much so that those commentaries, especially of Paul's Epistles, are in the manner of a catena rather than an ordinary Bible

commentary. Greek catenae were popular in the early Greek Church. The word “catena” means “chain”, which is a chain of quotes by different writers that create a running commentary on Scripture. A common Bible commentary is when a writer will comment on each passage of Scripture, while the catena is when a compiler will take, often, direct quotes from multiple writers and place them after each passage of Scripture to serve as commentary that explains the meaning and interpretation of each given passage. By the time of Oecumenius in the sixth century, those who wrote commentaries on the Bible were somewhat compilers themselves, because it was a sign of orthodoxy to draw from earlier Church Fathers when expounding Scripture. Even ordinary Bible commentaries by individual writers were in many ways catenae, because even though many of them may not have copied word for word from earlier Church Fathers, they would often depend on them and preserve what their predecessors wrote. Especially by the time of the ninth and tenth centuries, just after the time of what most consider to be the period of the Early Church Fathers, those writers who made commentaries on the Bible rarely ever wrote anything original in their commentaries but would write in the manner of a catena without necessarily appearing to be a catena outwardly; but with examination, it would be obvious that they drew heavily upon others, not entirely quoting word of word, but slightly rephrasing excerpts. In this day and time some would consider that flirting with plagiarism, while back in those days it was considered sound orthodox exposition on Scripture, and no one took offense to it. While the Greek Church produced commentaries in the form of catenae, the Latin Church evolved in a similar fashion by creating glossed Bibles such as the Glossa Ordinaria, which was the standard “Study Bible” for centuries during and after the twelfth century.

As for the commentaries by Oecumenius, it is outwardly obvious that he took the role as a compiler of quotes for his commentaries

on Paul's Epistles, while his commentaries on the Catholic Epistles, even though he did draw upon earlier Church Fathers, those commentaries are in the manner of an ordinary commentary. Here is an excerpt from the introduction to the commentaries by Oecumenius from the *Patrologia Graeca* (Greek Church Fathers collection) concerning the topic...

Moreover, it is clear who the author of the commentaries is; it is evident that he is not the primary author of all the material, since in the Acts of the Apostles and in the letters of Paul, many things are summarized here, which Chrysostom had treated more extensively. Furthermore, the opinions of many others are referenced, sometimes with only the names placed in the text, and sometimes with additional notes in the margin: which we have entirely left as they were found in the example. However, regarding the Apocalypse, a certain author is clearly indicated, with the names of those from whom he had extracted some things added at the beginning. Moreover, in all these commentaries, the opinions of various authors are frequently presented, with their names suppressed, I do not know whether due to the negligence of the copyists. Nevertheless, it is evident from this that you often find something contrary to what had preceded. And let us bring forth an example for the sake of a word: when he previously said in the Apocalypse that Babylon is Constantinople, not the world nor any other city, afterwards he states and proves in many places that it is the world, and no particular city. Moreover, although in the earlier books no one has prefixed his name, as is the custom among the Greeks, never publishing under his own name what he has not elaborated by his own effort, but rather collecting certain patches from various sources: yet from evident conjectures we gather that Oecumenius is partly the author of these, partly the collector who, however, sometimes, when he presents his opinion after others, has also added his own name, lest anyone attribute it to others, which he himself

did not consider worthy to be compared with their opinions. However, he has extracted many things from Chrysostom, whose name he only took care to add when he was reciting his words, but not when he was referring to his opinion in more concise terms. As for Oecumenius, who has transmitted all these things to us, except for the Apocalypse, as they are now published, we gather this from the following arguments. First, in the last words of the commentaries on the Epistle to the Colossians, with his own name prefixed in the margin, he writes in this manner: "Since I have not found the scholia of the blessed John on the Epistle to the Colossians in an unbroken form, I have written them as I could. Therefore, if anything light or worthy of reproach has been found in them, let him who reads know that such a lapse is mine." Again, in the fourth chapter to the Ephesians, he has these words, added in the margin under the name of Oecumenius, "Notice what I also thought: for it was not given to consider what belongs to the saint himself." Understanding Chrysostom, for which reason the name of John was added in the margin. Therefore, Oecumenius sufficiently shows that he is a collector of commentaries on all the Epistles, yet he has made no mention of himself elsewhere, because he had obtained an entire copy of Chrysostom. Again, the explanation of this is placed more frequently after the explanations of others, sometimes providing a reason for those things that were previously mentioned, often adding, "It seems to me that this can also be said." What if it is said in this way, according to the understanding that Saint John also holds: or even citing the names of Cyril or Basil or others. Furthermore, this can be seen in many places, some of which we will enumerate here. To the Romans, in the fifth chapter at those words, "Sin is not imputed where there is no law"; in the ninth chapter at those words, "Unless the Lord of Hosts had left us a seed"; in the first to the Corinthians 6, when it says, "He who engages in sexual immorality sins against his own body"; in chapter 7, "I have no command of the Lord

concerning virgins"; in chapter 15, "When he delivers the kingdom to God the Father." And likewise, "As if God were all in all"; to the Ephesians 2, "According to the prince of the power of the air"; in chapter 4, "From whom the whole body is fitted and joined together." In chapter 4, "Let not the sun go down on your anger," where he says: "I have heard some interpret it this way." To the second Thessalonians 3, "Furthermore, may the Lord direct your hearts." To the Hebrews 10, "Having a shadow of the law of good things to come"; in chapter 12, "Who for the joy set before him"; and in many other places as well. Since it is therefore more clearly evident that the Oecumenius collected commentaries on the Epistles of Paul, we believe that he did the same in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Catholic Epistles, although he did not add his name there: since the phrasing is entirely his, except that he had fewer to copy there, the names of whom we scarcely ever find added in the Greek manuscript, neither in the text of the letter nor in the margin.³

As for the commentaries on the Catholic Epistles by Oecumenius, some commentators on the Bible after him from the Greek Church relied heavily upon him, most especially Theophylact (1055-1107 A.D.), who was a Byzantine Archbishop of Ohrid and Bulgaria. As a matter of fact, Theophylact's commentaries on the Catholic Epistles are somewhat slightly condensed versions of Oecumenius. Some sources say that their commentaries are "identical", but that is not entirely true. These commentaries by Oecumenius and Theophylact are not carbon copies of each others, but Theophylact was not shy about copying at length word for word from Oecumenius. Theophylact did slightly condense the content by Oecumenius when he could, and he would rephrase some things. But by today's standards it would be considered blatant plagiarism. But like I said above, back then, this was considered to be a noble preservation of traditional orthodoxy. It is said that imitation is the best form of flattery.

The English translation of these commentaries by Oecumenius on the epistles of Peter comes from the *Patrologia Graeca* (*Patrologiae Cursus Completus*. Greek Series) volume 118.

1 The complete commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse : now printed for the first time from manuscripts at Messina, Rome, Salonika, and Athos, Ann Arbor : University of Michigan, Hoskier, H. C. (Herman Charles), 1864-1938, editor. Page 4

2 William C. Weinrich, Greek Commentaries on Revelation, InterVarsity Press, 2011, Pages xix-xx

3 Patrologia Graeca (Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca) 118. Oecumenius v.1: Commentary on Acts, Commentary on Paul's letters, Commentary on the Catholic letters. Pages 16-17

HYPOTHESIS OF THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF PETER

This letter is written by Peter to the Jews who had become Christians and were dispersed in various places, teaching them. For he confirms those who believed from among the Jews. First, he narrates and shows that faith in Christ was announced by the prophets, and that the redemption which would come through His blood was signified by them: and that all things to which angels desire to look have been announced to them and the Gentiles. Then, having urged them to conduct themselves worthily toward Him who called them, Peter exhorts them to honor even kings and commands harmony among women and men, and after briefly encouraging them regarding morals, he signifies that a preaching of salvation and resurrection was also made by the Lord in Hades: so that those who had previously died might indeed rise and be judged in the body, but through the grace of resurrection may persevere. And that the end of all things is imminent, and all should be prepared, as if to give an account to the Judge: and thus Peter concludes the letter.

THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF PETER.

SECTIONS

1. Of regeneration in Christ, and of patience in temptations and afflictions, and of the saving faith which was foretold by the prophets.
2. From hope and sanctification and firm conversion, which is necessary in addition to adoption.

3. That it may be lived worthily according to the adoption through Christ, for the benefit also of those who are strangers, to the glory of God.

4. On subjection to superiors, and fraternal love and divine worship: in which he discusses the subjection of servants and the patient endurance for the sake of Christ. On the obedience of women and harmony towards men, and the salvation that is in spirit, in the likeness of Sarah: on the behavior of men towards women. On meekness and mercy towards all, of which the type was God's kindness in Noah, and in us, however, the compassion of Christ through baptism.

5. On the rejection of wrongful actions and the recovery of fruits in the spirit according to the diversity of gifts.

6. That from the fellowship with Christ it is necessary to overcome natural adversities, and from hope to bear losses inflicted by others.

7. Admonition of the priests concerning the care and visitation of the flock: in which it also addresses the common modesty of all towards individuals, for victory against the Devil.

8. Prayer for the perfection of the believers.

PETER THE APOSTLE
THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE

CHAPTER 1

Of regeneration in Christ, and of patience in temptations
and afflictions, and of the saving faith which was foretold
by the prophets.

1:1-2 *Peter, Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, grace to you and peace be multiplied.*

The series and order are now collected: *Peter, Apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.* The rest, however, will be placed by interjection: for they signify to whom the letter is written. However, that particle is used *according to the foreknowledge of God*, to signify that there is no prophet who is inferior in anything, except in time. That they were sent, says Isaiah: "He has sent me to announce good news to the poor." (Isa. 61:1) But although later times have brought this to pass, it is not, however, the foreknowledge of God; rather, in this, he shows himself equal to Jeremiah, who was known and sanctified before he was formed in the womb and designated as a prophet to the nations. And since the prophets, among other things, had foretold the coming of Christ (for this reason they were sent), he adds the necessity of his apostleship, saying:

"I was sent *in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*," signifying through what is proposed: "This is the manner of my apostleship, to be set apart." The name signifies through *sanctification*: as it is said, "And you shall be to me a peculiar people sanctified," (Deut. 14:2) that is, separated from other nations. Therefore, the manner of his apostleship was to separate through spiritual gifts obedient nations, sprinkled with the passion and blood of Christ, not with the ashes of a heifer, when it must be purified, taken from the pollution of the Gentiles: but with the blood received from the passion of Christ. At the same time, it also touches upon a certain prolog to martyrdom of blood for Christ suffered by those who believe in him: for he who follows the footsteps of the teacher through obedience, when it is absolutely necessary, will not refuse to shed his own blood for him who poured out his for the whole world.

"Peter, Apostle of Jesus Christ." Here he writes to those who were of the circumcision, as does blessed James, but he indeed addresses all Jews who inhabited the world, wherever they were; however, this one specifically addresses the regions of Pontus in Galatia. He also added Pontus to Galatia. For there is another Galatia near the Celts which is also truly Galatia, from which those he is now discussing had migrated. Therefore, he directs his speech to these and other nations which are mentioned in the preface, using this letter universally or generally. The series of letters is therefore this, with the addition of those things that have been said through deficiency for the sake of manifestation, for this reason also he employs rearrangement and the alteration of figures to the word.

Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ... receiving the end of your faith¹, and what is that? Salvation of the soul: concerning which salvation even the prophets searched and inquired,

"To the chosen sojourners." Sojourners, either because of dispersion he said, or also because all who live according to God are sojourners on earth, as David also says: "I am a sojourner with you and a pilgrim as all my fathers were." (Ps. 38:13) The name "sojourner" [παρεπίδημος] signifies something different from a "newcomer" προσήλυτος. The former indicates someone who has come from elsewhere or from abroad, while the latter παρεπίδημος denotes something more shameful. For just as a πάρεργον, that is, something incidental, is less valuable than an ἔργον, that is, a work, and a πάροδος, that is, a passage, is less than a ὁδός, that is, a way: Indeed, work and way are proper and are pursued with intention, while passage and what is done incidentally are like those things that intrude upon these. Thus, the term παρεπίδημος, as it intrudes upon existence, seems indeed to signify more abjectly than ἐπίδημος.

"grace to you and peace be multiplied." Grace, because you are saved freely, having contributed nothing to it, *"And peace"*, for this is necessary for those who have offended their Lord and have become His enemies.

1:3 *Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

Peter blesses God, referring this act of thanksgiving for the good things He grants. But what are those things that are given? Hope, not like the promised dwelling in the land of Canaan through Moses, which hope, being corruptible, promises corruptible things: but *a living hope*. And from where has it received life? From *Jesus Christ who rose from the dead*. For by the fact that He rose, He grants the same resurrection to those who come to Him through faith. Therefore, the *living hope* that is given is an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance, not laid up on earth, as it

was for the fathers, but in heaven, from where it has also obtained endlessness, which is even greater than the inheritance that is on earth. And for this reason, the preservation and guardianship of the believers: for even this the Lord prayed, saying: "Holy Father, keep them." (Jn. 17:11) But also power. And what is patience? That which endures until the revelation or manifestation of the Lord. For if the protection were not powerful, it would not last for such a long time. Therefore, since there are such great and such things that are given, it is not absurd that joy follows those who receive. However, since the master's promise brings not joy but sorrow by saying: "In the world, you will have tribulation," (Jn. 16:33) he adds a little to the exultation. And because it is sad, he adds "Now," speaking in accordance with his leader, who says: "In the world, you will have tribulation," but your sorrow will turn into joy. Either what he said "Now" or "But," is added for the sake of exultation, as if the exultation that will follow will not last for a little while, but for a long and infinite time. Or "A little," refers to what is sorrowful, so that the sense here is: If it is necessary, we are now sorrowful for a little while through various tribulations. But since afflictions bring about turmoil, he added the reason for afflictions, that through these your faith is made more manifest and more precious than gold, since that which is tested by fire is more valuable to men. He also adds: If it is necessary, for not every faithful person is tested through affliction, nor is every sinner. Yet neither does each of these always rejoice: the just are indeed afflicted for the increase of their crowns, while sinners suffer to pay the penalties of their sins. However, not all the just are afflicted, lest you attribute vice to praise and detest virtue. Nor are all sinners afflicted, lest there be a loss of hope in the resurrection, as if all those who are their own receive here.

1:4-9 *In an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance, and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the*

power of God through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. In which you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found in praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy, inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

If there is an inheritance in heaven, the restoration of things is magnificent in a thousand years.

"In which you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary." This is the order: affected by sorrow now, if necessary, that is, if this also should be (for not all saints are afflicted) at the end of time you will rejoice, for the present is accepted for the future. Or even through the present, as is declared in the following.

"In praise, honor." It signifies the reason why the righteous are afflicted through these things, while also comforting them, because through afflictions they become more manifest: and making them more diligent by adding:

at the revelation of Jesus Christ, at that time, through the demonstration of sufferings, a great nobility will be added to those who have competed. Moreover, he adds another thing that attracts to the endurance of afflictions. What is that?

"whom having not seen, you love." For if, when you do not see him with bodily eyes, you love him solely by hearing, he says, consider how great a love you will show when you see him, and that when he is manifested in glory: for if his passion has so attracted you, how much will his manifestation affect you with incredible splendor, when he will even grant you the salvation of souls as a reward? Therefore, in order that you may be known in

such a way, also receiving such glory, show the briefest endurance in time, and you will have the highest goal of your purpose.

1:10-12 *Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to come to you searched and investigated carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified in advance about the sufferings that would come upon Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven; into which angels long to see.*

Since Peter had made mention of the salvation of the soul: however, this was not clear, but he brings forth the prophets who inquired and studied about it. For they inquired about future events: as Daniel did, who was called a man of desires by the angel, who gave him divine responses. (Dan. 9:23)

"inquiring what person or time the Spirit." To that, namely the consummation of the age: such as when the Jews, through various captivities, deviating from the perfect worship of God, were constituted towards the mystery of Christ. Note, however, that the spirit of Christ openly contemplates and discusses Christ. Moreover, this Spirit signified the afflictions of Christ, as Isaiah indeed says: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter." (Isa. 53:7) And through Jeremiah: "Come, let us put wood in his bread." (Jer. 11:19) Moreover, the resurrection through Hosea: "On the third day we will be raised up before Him, and we will pursue Him to know the Lord; as the dawn is ready, we will find Him." (Hos. 6:2-3) However, it has been revealed not for Himself, but for you. Moreover, these two things he does with these words: He shows the providence of the prophets, and that those who are now called to the faith of Christ were foreknown by God before the

foundation of the world. Indeed, through the foresight of the prophets, he leads them, so that they are not unbelieving regarding those whom the prophets greatly cared for, for their own benefit: for neither do wise sons despise their father's labors. Indeed, if they sought and found these things, when they would not benefit themselves, and committed the findings to books, as if transmitting an inheritance to us, we would act unjustly, he says, if we were negligent in these matters: therefore, do not show our gospel as empty, leading you who announce these things to you, as rejected and insignificant. Therefore, these things are from the providence of the prophets. Through this, however, that they were foreknown by God, they are terrified lest they present themselves as unworthy by divine foreknowledge or by His calling, but they urge and inspire each other, so that they may be deemed worthy of the gift of Christ.

"through those who preached the Gospel to you." If both the prophets and these have effectively worked through the Holy Spirit: indeed, those in prophecy, and these in the Gospel: nothing is different from the prophets for them: therefore, you must bring the same diligence that those who were obedient to the prophets, lest you be subjected to the same punishment as those who were unbelieving towards the prophets.

It must be noted, however, that through this mystery of the Trinity, Peter reveals: the Son and the Spirit when he says *"the Spirit of Christ,"* but the Father in what follows, *"from heaven."* Moreover, when he says *"from heaven,"* do not take it according to place, but understand it as excellence, because it especially applies to God.

"by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven." He speaks of what had happened on the day of Pentecost.

However, that *"into which angels longed to see"* means that which angels also desire; for this reason, even while such things were

happening, they sang out of abundant joy: "Glory to God in the highest." (Luke 1:14)

From hope and sanctification and firm conversion, which is necessary in addition to adoption.

1:13-16 *Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope perfectly for the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ, as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, in your ignorance: but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written: "Be holy, for I am holy."* [Lev. 19:2]

For this reason, an exhortation is brought forth from those things which were previously held in honor. For when it was said, The prophets provided you with what concerns your salvation, and these were so admirable that even angels were made agreeable: and that they themselves also demonstrated that these things were agreeable in that they sweetly sang from abundant joy at the birth of Christ, "Glory to God in the highest." (Luke 1:14) Therefore, having said this, he adds for their sake, saying: "Since these things have been administered to you all, both agreeable and most desirable, not only to men but also to angels, therefore do not be negligent in being affected by these things, but directing yourselves and arranging yourselves with courage. For this signifies the girding of the loins: which Job was also commanded by God. (Job 38,40) He explains what he means by loins, saying that they refer to those who are of the *mind*. Therefore, he says, prepared, perfectly *sober, hope perfectly in the grace that is brought to you*. Moreover, this is what he said a little earlier, concerning the second coming of the Lord; consider that he did not simply say, "Sober," but added "*perfectly*," as if the law had provided a slender and introductory soberness.

Conforming [Συσχηματίζειν], however, means to shape and adapt oneself to the present circumstances. This is also what some foolish people now say: Conform yourself to affairs and business. Therefore, it commands to renounce such vanities: whether those who were previously knowledgeable and wise, or those who ignorantly clung to these. But now, he says, you, and those like you, *be holy* yourselves.

1:17-19 *And if you call upon the Father, him which without respect of persons, judges according to every one's work: in fear of turning, you spend your time in your dwelling. 18 Knowing that not with corruptible things, gold or silver, you are redeemed from your vain conversation of your fathers' tradition. 19 But with the precious blood as it were of an immaculate and unspotted Lamb, Christ.*

Gathering and with much exaggeration: first from the angels who are affected by a longing spirit for these things: then from the description of what is just again: from that which is necessary. For since they *call upon God as Father*, it is necessary that those who desire adoption, which are worthy of the Father, should act: and fourthly, since they have received countless goods, through the established price for them: that is the blood of Christ which was given as a price for those who had sold themselves to evil through sin. After these things, he commands to have a continuous *fear* throughout life: not the initial one, for this has a ensuing punishment, but perfect *fear*. For perfect *fear* always accompanies the *holy* ones, lest anything be lacking to them of what is fitting for the perfect. Consider how, when it has been said by Christ, "The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son," (Jn. 5:22) Peter now says that the *Father* judges. To which we say that the Son can do nothing except what he sees the Father doing: for this is what Christ also said. Furthermore, this shows

that it is inherent to the Holy Trinity: and that the divine operations are not divided among the persons we see in it: but there is both complete identity and a peaceful concord free from strife. Therefore, he said without distinction that the Father judges: as if it were truly and universally considered common to all, whatever another might say is divinely accomplished by one of the three. Moreover, since the Lord frequently calls the apostles sons, and said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven," (Mark 2:5) and to the woman who suffered from a flow of blood, "Daughter, your faith has made you well," (Mark 5:34) there is nothing obscure or absurd if he also calls this one the father of the offspring whom he generated through the sharing of holiness.

"*In fear of turning.*" According to this limit of perfection, it was also said by the blessed David: "Fear the Lord, all you His saints, for there is nothing lacking to those who fear Him." (Ps. 38:10)

1:20-25 *He was indeed predetermined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God: since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit. Love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever: because all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls away: but the word of the Lord endures forever. Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.*

He connected the death of Christ with the resurrection. For he fears the easy change of beginners in faith to skepticism, due to the disgrace of Christ's afflictions, but he says there is no recent mystery about Christ: since this also disturbs the foolish; but in

former times and *before the foundation of the world*, it had been hidden by divine providence until the opportune time, indeed it was revealed to the prophets who inquired about these things, as he had said a little earlier, now, however, he says, it is more manifest, because what had been *foreknown before the foundation of the world*, namely by God, is now *revealed*, whether completed or perfected. And he adds because of whom it may be perfect, namely because of you. For because of you, he says, he *raised him from the dead*. But why because of you? So that when you have *purified yourselves by obeying the truth through the Spirit, you may have faith and hope in God*. And how have you purified yourselves? Because by believing in Him who has proclaimed to you the resurrection from the dead to an incorruptible life, you are debtors to Him who, being incorruptible, called you to walk in newness of life.

But if both Peter and Paul say that the Father raised the Lord from the dead, do not be disturbed: for now they are using introductory teachings to say these things. For listen to Christ saying that he raised himself, when he says: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (Jn. 2:19) But also Luke: "To whom he also showed himself alive, after he had suffered." (Acts 1:3) And again Christ himself: "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." (Jn. 10:18) Therefore, in a certain dispensation, the Son's resurrection is sometimes referred to the Father, to show the unity of the operation of the Father and the Son.

The sequence of the letters is as follows: *He was indeed predetermined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory: so that you may purify your souls (in fact, ὥστε is taken for 'so that') in obeying the truth, having faith and hope in God*. For it is accepted that εἶναι means "to have", because of the preceding. For if ὥστε

is left in its meaning as stated, the sentence will be incoherent and unintelligible.

"*Love one another fervently.*" In this way, it must be said: *That you may have faith and hope in God, when you have purified your souls through obedience to the truth*, that is, when you have prepared yourselves for *obedience to the truth through the Spirit*. For the obedience in evils and lies is not through the Spirit, that is, it is not spiritual. Since purification for obedience or preparation, exercise, care, also wishes to attract many other helpers, provided it is spiritual and free from envy: but this is the work of *fervent love*, making a neighbor a participant in the goods that someone has obtained: therefore, it adds: to *love fervently*, devoid of hypocrisy. However, this is subjected by deficiency: for it is familiar to the blessed apostles, as it is also found in blessed James, "Who is wise among you and endowed with knowledge?" (James 3:13) And again: "Now you who say, 'Today and tomorrow,'" (James 5:1) and many other similar things. That spiritual ones should, in turn, make others partakers of all good things with utmost diligence, can be learned from what he says elsewhere: "I indeed consider them to be mutual for the provocation of love," (Heb. 10:24) that is, to sharpen and stir it up.

Because all flesh is grass. When he said, "*not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,*" he also adds, by casting down and despising the easy corruption of human glory, and so to speak, its non-subsistence, enticing the listeners to cling to those things which are proposed by themselves, as those which have subsistence and endlessness. However, the subsistence of those things that come to corruption is here called *grass* and the *flower of grass*. Moreover, the weakness of the subsistence of grass is brought to a greater faith of the word: with which David compares our life. (Ps. 41:1) Wherever, therefore, it shows our glory to be so worthless, it again repeats and teaches more openly what it is that

has regenerated them *through the word of God which lives and abides forever*, and it says:

"But this is the word that has been announced to you." That which remains forever is confirmed in the same way with the Lord. For He Himself said: *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."* (Matt. 24:35) Moreover, it must be known that this should be expressed: *"Love one another fervently"* should be expressed in a manner free from all deceit." For such outcomes tend to follow those which are treated and carried out for their sake. Therefore, since mutual love from the world leads to fervent love that is unaware of deceit, it is rightly done that *"From the world"* precedes, and *"To love fervently"* follows. It should be noted that the preposition εἰς, that is, "unto", is translated into διὰ, that is, "for the sake of", so that the sense is: for the sake of *"Love one another fervently."*

CHAPTER 2

That it may be lived worthily according to the adoption through Christ, for the benefit also of those who are strangers, to the glory of God.

2:1-6 *Therefore, laying aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisies and envies, and all slanders, like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good: to whom coming as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and honorable, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is also contained in the Scripture: Behold, I lay in Sion a chief*

cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes in Him will by no means be put to shame [Isa. 28:16].

Where the excellence of spiritual rebirth shows above birth according to the flesh, and demonstrates the despair of mortal glory: for birth is indeed corruptible and filthy, while glory is not different from those things that germinate in springtime: it shows that the same does not occur in the Lord's word. For all human opinion soon ceases, but not so the word of God; rather, it has a perpetual duration and true promises. For that is what the addition means, "The word which by the gospel was preached to you." (1 Peter 1:25) When he had woven this in the preceding parts, taking from each what is useful and tends toward necessary use, he adapts the teaching to moral discourse, and says:

Therefore, laying aside all malice, designating so many and such things with these few words. For those who are reborn to incorruptible life, it is unworthy to be caught in the snares of malice, and to prefer what is not to what truly is. For malice is not substance, but revolves around the vice of created substance. However, there is a great distinction between the life that subsists and that which has only loyalty to what subsists. These, however, are worthy, he says, to be shown to be free from *deceit and hypocrisies and from envies, and all slanders*. Indeed, *deceit and hypocrisies* are far from "the word which by the gospel was preached to you," (1 Peter 1:25) as *deceit* leads to the destruction of those who are seduced, while *hypocrisies* proceed in variation and change of that which is: against which the valuable discourse that has instructed you seems to proceed. But what place will envy and slander have in you, who, bound by the solid bond of brotherly love, can receive harm from any discord stirring up? Moreover, he who does not know that envy and slander are the causes of discord and brotherly hatred is unaware of both Cain and the tragedy that surrounded him, who, because of envy, was torn from brotherly union, and conceived deceit, hypocrisy, and murder. (Gen. 4:1)

But he is pure from slander who is envious, provided that Joseph's brothers are deemed suitable to confirm the speech, who reported this to the father about countless matters. (Gen. 37:1)

Therefore, he said, purifying yourselves from all these things, *as newborn infants*, approach (for such is the kingdom of God, as the Lord has demonstrated [Luke 17:16]) and grow up in the word of malice, until you reach the measure of the fullness of Christ's age. (Eph. 6:14)

For *when you have tasted*, that is, when you have progressed through the practice of the sacred commandments according to the Gospel, you have recognized the sweetness of the doctrine by sense: for sense is more effective than any word for knowledge, since that which reaches experience is more pleasing than any word. Therefore, as you have *tasted the Lord is good*, show the goodness of sweetness to others, and apply yourselves to Him *as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and honorable*, who has also been proclaimed through the prophets: being bound to one another in love, and being fitted together for the completion of a *spiritual house*, having no care for contempt among men: for neither did Christ, *the cornerstone*, have that care, who was *rejected* by them: and being built up and perfected into a *spiritual house* by yourselves, demonstrating a *holy priesthood*, offer *spiritual sacrifices*, which are far more *acceptable to God* than sacrifices lacking reason. For you cannot, without a firm bond of mutual love, offer pure sacrifices to God. For it is said: "Lifting up holy hands without anger and disputes." (1 Tim. 2:8) For how can one who strives to unite himself with God through prayer achieve this, while separating himself from his brother through anger and wicked disputes?

2:7-12 *To you therefore who believe, honor is given. But to those who do not believe, the stone which the builders rejected has*

become the head of the corner, and a stone to stumble over, and a rock to offend: namely, to those who stumble at the word, being disobedient to that which they were also appointed. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who have obtained mercy, that you may proclaim the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light: who once were not a people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Beloved, I beg you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul: have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that in that which they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

"To you therefore who believe, honor is given." To God, namely, who said, I lay, *honor is given*: but against the unbelievers, this is what God now says: I lay for you in Sion *a stone* on which you will *stumble over*: which is both a rock to which they will stumble, and a rock on which they will stumble if they fall: who, namely, the unbelievers, remaining in *the word*, stumble over it: for which, namely, *they were also appointed*. Therefore, the whole part must be ordered in this way: Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes in Him will by no means be put to shame [Isa. 28:16]: precious to you who believe, but to the unbelievers, a stone over which they will stumble: which stone the builders rejected, but has become the head of the corner, uniting the believers into one: but to the fallen, it is for those who stumble, namely, not believing in the word of the Gospel.

"to that which they were also appointed." not as if they are separated from God, this has been said. For no cause of destruction is administered by Him who desires all men to be saved, but those who have made themselves vessels of wrath, and unbelief has followed, and in that order they have been given to what they had prepared themselves for. For if man has been made free in will, and cannot be obligated in free will, no one could respectfully accuse him who has decreed such a fate for himself, which he has brought upon himself through his own actions.

Furthermore, Christ is called *the head of the corner*, as he completes the two walls of the Father's house, joining those who were from the nations and the Jews through his own contract, and adapting them into one fitting unity: indeed removing useless sacrifices from the midst, while transferring demonic superstition to the true worship of God.

"But you are a chosen generation." After criticizing the wickedness of the morals of the unbelievers, and that they had become the cause of their own unbelief, he now turns to praise those who had excelled, saying: *You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood*: as if to say: They, indeed, through their hardness and disobedience have stumbled upon the cornerstone, but they were not co-built; but you, on the contrary, have been built up into *a royal priesthood* through obedience: as a *chosen generation, as a holy nation*. But let them not dissolve themselves with excessive praise: and furthermore, let them not seem to have a certain inherited right as if they were a holy people and the other things that follow: and that they were considered worthy of such honor because they were of the lineage of Abraham, nor had they ever stumbled, he adds, suppressing their pride, and says: Do not be exalted because of your lineage; for you were not chosen for the royal priesthood because of Abraham: for those who descended from him had a priestly tribe distinct from the royal one: therefore, you were not chosen as a people and a lineage, separated for the royal priesthood because of Abraham: for none of these things were said about Abraham, but because of Christ, who is also called a priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 109:4), a gentle king, just and saving; (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5) who also rode on the colt of an ass.

Therefore, to those who have both, by the merit of the sacred baptismal rebirth, you are called a *chosen generation* and a *royal priesthood*. This you have from *Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*. Therefore, through your works made in the light, announce His virtues to other men. Thus, you have this from His kindness, since you are a people who once were not a people: and who have obtained mercy, *you who once were not a people have now obtained mercy*. Moreover, to ensure that the word is more devoid of hatred, it confirms the word of reproach from Hosea, "Therefore, announce His virtues through good works." (Hos. 2:1) But how do they announce? The Lord Himself teaches

when He says: "Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16)

"a people who have obtained mercy," that is, to possession or inheritance. Indeed, all are God's creation, but the possession belongs only to those who are deemed worthy of this benefit by their own deeds, "that you may announce His virtues." Therefore, He says, you are chosen, so that by obedience you may be called heralds of the virtue of Him who called you.

"Beloved, I beg you." This part must be taken in this way: *Beloved, I beg you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.* It is customary for teachers to introduce moral conduct after the discourse of doctrine: this blessed one also does so now, calling them ἀγαπητοί, that is, beloved or rather lovable and friends, and not ἀγαπωμένοι, that is, somewhat beloved: for all are desirable for everything; for those who are desirable for one thing are called ἀγαπώμενοι, not ἀγάπητοί.

Indeed, he says that *fleshly lusts wage war against the soul*, since according to the blessed Paul, the flesh lusts against the spirit. (Gal. 5:17) For the desires of the flesh, concerning the enjoyment of the senses, confuse reason and make the soul servile.

I beg you, he says, *to have your conversation honest among the Gentiles.* However, the term ἔχειν, that is, "to have", is taken for ἔχοντες, that is, "having". Peter introduces the Gentiles as slanderers against us. But if anyone wishes to learn this, from what has been written by Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons in Gaul, about the martyrs Sanctus and Blandina², it will be possible to know precisely. And as they are proposed briefly in the middle, these are: When the Greeks had apprehended the servants of these Christians, educated in divine mysteries, they then inflicted violence, so that they might learn something secret about the Christians from them: since these servants had no way to speak to those inflicting violence for pleasure and grace, except what they had heard from their masters, that divine communion is the blood and body of Christ, believing themselves that it was truly blood and flesh, they responded to those inquiring. They, taking this as if it were actually being done by Christians, also revealed it to others among the Greeks: and the martyrs

Sanctus and Blandina were compelled to confess this under torture. To whom Blandina spoke freely and wisely, saying: How could they bear this who, for the sake of divine study and meditation, do not even partake of permitted meats? Furthermore, she calls the day of visitation an inquiry of worldly matters. For when the inquiry about our life comes from them, where things are found to be contrary to what their suspicion was, they not only become ashamed, but they themselves are corrected, and God is glorified.

On subjection to superiors, and fraternal love and divine worship: in which he discusses the subjection of servants and the patient endurance for the sake of Christ. On the obedience of women and harmony towards men, and the salvation that is in spirit, in the likeness of Sarah: on the behavior of men towards women. On meekness and mercy towards all, of which the type was God's kindness in Noah, and in us, however, the compassion of Christ through baptism.

2:13-17 Therefore, be subject to every human creature for the Lord's sake: whether to the king as the supreme authority, or to governors as those sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do well. For it is the will of God that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's servants. Honor everyone, love the brotherhood. Fear God, honor the king.

The *human creature* is said to be the leaders who have been appointed by *kings*, or even the *kings* themselves, because they too have been established and placed by men. For Scripture knows how to call *creation* a constitution, as when it says: "That he might create two in himself into one new man," (Eph. 2:15) that is, to place or establish. Therefore, it says: "Be subject to human authorities; be subject *for the Lord's sake*." *For the Lord's sake*, that is, as the Lord has commanded. But what has the Lord commanded? "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (Matt. 22:21) Therefore, in what they command outside of God, that is, what is contrary to or beyond

God's constitution, they must not be obeyed. This the Lord and his disciple absolutely command, so that the Greeks might not be able to say that Christianity brings about the subversion of life and politics, and is the cause of disorder and confusion. Moreover, for the Lord, also on account of the faithful. For it was likely that some of them would say: Since we are deemed worthy of the kingdom of heaven, add great dignity to us from it, why then do you again cast us down, subjecting us to worldly princes? If anyone should say this, let him know, he says, that this kind of command is not mine, but the Lord's. However, Peter also shows to whom and to what kind of princes it is necessary to be subject, namely to those who uphold what is just. He also adds the reason, because both *the will of God* and the example of our righteousness is in submission to princes, and what is more, it brings shame upon the unbelievers. For when they speak ill of us as being arrogant and stubborn and disobedient, seeing us humble and obedient in what is necessary, their mouths are more shut and they are put to shame.

"as free people." The order is this: Be subject as free people, and not using *your freedom as a cover-up for evil*, but also as servants of God. Not only honor the princes, but also *everyone*: indeed, those who *love brotherhood, fear God, and honor the king*. However, as if they were free, John Chrysostom³ explained it this way, saying: "Let them not say, 'We are free from the world, we have become citizens of heaven, and you again subject us to princes and command us to obey?'" Therefore Peter says: "So obey as if you were free," that is, as if complying with him who has freed you, and this he has commanded. For you should not have in mind evil, that is, the excuse for disobedience and stubbornness, for the very freedom for which you refuse to obey. However, according to another consideration, something can also be said about this matter. A person is *free* according to the Lord, who does not obey anything absurd. Therefore, since living in hypocrisy is not free, but that of one who is subject to passions, whether of flattery or any other dishonorable pleasure: for which someone also pretends to be in pretense, lest it appear what he is, and to whom he has endured to serve (this, however, is foreign and alien to the servants of God), he now commands that subjection be shown to princes, with true and not fictitious morals, lest we exhibit a forced subjection towards them as if hostile; and when such evil lies hidden in us, which is certainly sincere and simple, let us make

a ploy and veil of manners, exhibiting an apparent subjection, and not one that proceeds from affection.

"*Fear God.*" Consider carefully how the fear of God is said to be distributed, and *honor to the king*, so that if fear is to be given to God, who can destroy both soul and body (Matt. 10:28), we should by no means obey kings when they urge us to do something absurd. For fear knows how to conquer even the honor that is given to kings; moreover, it will deprive of honor those who are compelled by them to do evil, according to the holy one who said: "The wicked are brought low before him." (Ps. 14:4)

2:18-25 *Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust. For this is grace, if anyone endures grief for the sake of conscience toward God when suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your sins, you take it patiently? But if, when you do good and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is praiseworthy before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

"*Servants, be subject.*" It must be understood that it means, that is, you are, just as when he said, Wives (1 Peter 3:1). "*with all fear.*" Fear is expressed in many ways: it is called fear and also that which is with knowledge, which is now understood through *Conscience*, which is also called reverence with fear; it is also called painful fear, which is experienced by some through the punishment, which even wild animals fear; it is again called initial fear which follows those approaching the Lord, because they are aware of many things that provoke punishment: therefore the harlot mentioned in the Gospel, fearing, approached Christ (Luke 7:37); but perfect fear is again said to be that which is always

present with all the saints, fearing lest anything be lacking in them for what is fitting for those who have been taken up to perfect love: therefore, since fear is expressed in many ways, whether it is just for servants to be presented to their masters through all these means, he who now encourages servants to be subject to their masters with all fear would not deny: since both initial and perfect fear would be present, it would rightly affect them: there, indeed, that they might fear, lest anything happen to them because of their offenses for which there would be no remedy; here, however, that they might not even think of anything, which, if accomplished, would be ungrateful to their master. Now, therefore, he speaks of fear that is due to conscience, that is, which occurs with a right conscience of reason: when, indeed, evil masters afflict their servants who have committed nothing. Therefore, judging this fear as worthy of praise, he commands that it be received with patience. Since those who have fear because of sins, whether those they have committed or even those they have not observed to do, are indeed good servants if they endure anything because of that, and are inclined towards correction: but they are not yet endowed with such great wisdom of mind as they would be if they endured affliction with a grateful heart, even when they were not conscious of any evil. This is great, this is also fulfilled by few; it is commended before God, as responding to the afflictions of Christ; since he himself, he says, did not suffer for his own sins: *for he committed no sin*, but suffered for us and for our transgressions. (Is. 53:8)

From the iniquities of my people, or because of the iniquities of the people, he was led to death, the prophet says (Is. 53:5), he places fear to be praised. However, he also wishes to retain servants with other fears: which is evident from what he says: *with all fear*. Moreover, he rightly and skillfully placed above other fears the fear that is due to *conscience towards God*, and demonstrated with the truest discourse that this alone is worthy of praise, for indeed they have a cause for the wrath of their masters against them, but here there is never anything of the sort.

"but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously," namely God, who gives to each according to their works (Rom. 2:6): this is just. But perhaps someone will say: How does Peter now say that the Lord, when he was being reviled, did not return reviling, and when he was suffering evil, did not threaten? Yet we see him calling some Jews dogs (Matt.

7:16; 15:26), and blind Pharisees (Matt. 15:14; 22:16), and threatening the Jews when he said: "It would be better for that man if he had not been born;" (Matt. 26:34) and: "It will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that city;" (Matt. 10:15) and: "Where their worm does not die," (Mark 9:48) and countless other things. We will say, therefore, that he does not say the Lord did not speak reviling, or did not threaten: but, when he was being reviled, he says he did not return reviling, and when he was suffering evil, he did not threaten. But although he might have uttered some reviling, he was not opposing those who reviled him, but reproaching and rebuking those who did not convert. However, when he was affected by reproaches and heard: "You have a demon," (Jn. 7:20; 8:48) and: "By the prince of demons he casts out demons," (Matt. 7:24; 9:34) and: "Behold, a glutton and a wine-drinker," (Matt. 9:19) did he direct reviling against them, saying something reproachful against them? Not at all, but he indeed said to them: "If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out?" (Matt. 7:27) Indeed, this man, a ravenous eater and drinker of wine, opposed the parable of the indignant children in the marketplace against those with whom they conspired, that when they played the flutes, they did not dance; when they sang lamentations, they did not weep. However, crucified and afflicted by punishments, he prayed rather than threatened the Jew before he would betray, and being affected by some evil, he threatened, restraining him from evil intent. Similarly, he showed those who would not receive the disciples that they would suffer something worse than the Sodomites: partly indeed urging them towards hospitality, partly opening a place for the preaching of the Gospel through fear. Therefore, he did not threaten these things while he was being afflicted by evils; and the word of Peter concerning the Lord's mercy is very true, saying that he did not bring any accusation against anyone while they attempted to accuse him.

"As dead to sins." For having become estranged by sins, (ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι), it is taken for ἀποθάνοντες, that is, dead.

"by whose stripes you were healed." For having been scourged by Pilate, he also bore scourges in the body.

CHAPTER 3

3:1-7 *Similarly, wives should be subject to their husbands, so that even those who do not obey the word may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Let your adornment not be external, consisting of braiding hair and the wearing of gold, or of fine clothing; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For in this way, holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, being subject to their husbands, just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him master. And you are her daughters if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.*

Concluding this discourse on morals; namely through kings, through presidents, through masters, through servants; since it has also been established that subjects should be subjected to kings and presidents in what is necessary and in what is appropriate, and through this it is shown that those princes who have laws as a certain incentive of justice, will not be condemned for those things they have done according to them: but in those cases where they have acted unjustly and without judgment and tyrannically against them, they will also perish through these. Indeed, the law was given to them for the benefit of the nations, as Paul also proclaims (Gal. 3:19). But also the authorities, just like the laws, were given for the benefit, and not as some wrongly wish, namely that the power of those who are on earth comes from the Devil: who supports this Devil by saying to the Lord: "All these things have been given to me, and I give them to whomever I wish." (Luke 4:6) For it is not by his command that kings are established, who have been given for the correction of evildoers, since the Devil does not bring about anything like this to be administered among men. For powers and princes have been given by God, partly for the preservation of justice and the correction and benefit of the subjects, partly indeed out of fear for the punishment and correction of wrongdoers; partly also to punish with fitting punishment those who are unruly. Therefore, this having been shown, and that it is good to be subjected, or to be disobedient is evil,

where it would also have been established in the same way that servants should obey their earthly masters, and that those who are afflicted and endure without cause by evil masters should receive the greatest praise: where in some way this would have recalled to the order of masters also through the slander of evil masters: it then also passes to the assembly of women, and says;

Let these two things concern women or wives, *to be subject to their husbands*, and to show themselves alienated from all *adornment* and culture, imitating *holy women*, for they too, he says, knew only this form of worship, namely obedience to their husbands. And what profit will come from this? The good imitation of those who are outside of the faith, which is also generated from our subjection to the rulers, and the praise of God on our behalf coming from them: this also greatly contributes to the praise of Christians, namely that for our sake He is not spoken ill of, but rather the name of God is blessed. But where he said "*holy women*" indefinitely, he also specifically adds *Sarah*: and proceeding in an encouraging manner, he calls them *daughters* of this Sarah, whether according to faith or even according to lineage. For it is necessary for daughters to imitate their mothers. With honest truth and decent Christian conduct, it also admonishes them to be merciful, without fearing the accounting of their husbands. For this indicates that they are not afraid of any terror. For it was likely that husbands would sometimes revisit the account of expenses. In this way, having raised the discourse, where Peter encouraged the female sex to be more generous towards their household, he also moderates the harshness of men towards their wives, and says:

"*Husbands, living together in an understanding way*, that is, learning through experience the triviality and folly of women in all things and their carnality in fear, be patient with them, not strictly reevaluating the accounts of what has been entrusted to them for safekeeping." However, as we said, the more freely they persist in giving to the poor, he admonishes men not to be demanding investigators. Yet, it seems to me that something deeper is suggested through this, and more charming and casual than what Paul hints at regarding the marital act. For Paul openly cries out: "Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by mutual consent," etc. (1 Corinthians 7:5) Here, however, more modestly, as we

said, speaking of *understanding* and thereby designating the matter itself, Peter advises, since the female sex is more prone to this slippery behavior, not to drive them away with harsh criticisms, but rather to treat them gently as the weaker ones, and then to persuade them to adopt some moderation in abstaining from such things: for this is what he wants to signify (moderation, I say, or abstinence) by saying,

"*showing honor*"; for honor does not follow unless someone looks towards something. Therefore, as to the weaker ones or even as co-heirs of the *grace of life*, it is necessary to use life in the custom of such people. And that we have not misused this understanding is made clear by what follows, when he says:

"*that your prayers may not be hindered*." For what kind of interruption of prayers can a man's severity towards his wife bring? Indeed, this negligence brings great attention and eagerness during the time of prayer. Therefore, it seems to me that this should be said. Furthermore, if someone has indicated this better, I certainly do not envy.

"*without a word*." Whether by ceasing all speech and all response, or because a demonstration through deeds is more effective than the anxious diligence found in words: for a silent deed is more excellent than a work deprived of speech.

"*but let it be the hidden man of the heart*." For all the glory of the king's daughter comes from within. "All her glory is that of the daughter of the king." (Ps. 44:14) For he knows here by blessed David (Ps. 19:14), and Paul (Eph. 3:16) is another inward man from the outer.

"*They adorn themselves*." Do you see that this refers to adornment or decoration as subjection?

3:8-16 *In summary, all of you, be united, compassionate, endowed with fraternal love, merciful, approachable, humility not repaying evil for evil or insult for insult, but instead blessing: knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. For whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek*

peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. And always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear: having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

Free from the ordinances that concerned both men and women, Peter then presents a common exhortation to all men, women, youths, adolescents, kings, leaders, subjects, and those who are governed, foreigners, citizens, the rich, and the poor. Therefore, he adds: "*In summary*." That is, what is the need to discuss in detail? I say simply to *all of you*. For this signifies *summary*/τέλος): and this refers to the goal of salvation proposed to all, and this is the law of love; established for all, from which all virtue proceeds, namely, the modesty of the soul, compassion, mercy, and other similar virtues which he enumerated,

the *united* indeed being harmony without discrimination about something with a willing spirit:

compassionate, however, is pity towards those who are afflicted as if towards oneself:

fraternal, on the other hand, is the due affection towards relatives as towards brothers.

Again, *merciful* is the movement from the soul to do good towards those who are in the same condition.

Indeed, *approachable* or benevolence is kindness and courtesy towards all, which also extends towards those of similar character and towards friends.

Humility, however, or modesty of the soul, is bearing another's insults, acknowledging one's own sins, and enduring accusations, which could also be a form of kindness of the soul.

Indeed, *insult* arises from a corrupt habit, which is rooted in the reproach of others. With these, he says, adorned with the aforementioned virtues, moreover, you should not be easily captured by warfare: furthermore, competitors are also directed by the divine way of living. For he who is blessed by all must certainly also be a competitor. And he brings in David (Ps. 34:12-15) as a witness saying:

For whoever desires to love life? Life, I say, not in which even irrational beings exist, but in which man lives according to God, and days that are not bad, but good. For the days of this age, according to the patriarch Jacob, are few and evil. (Gen. 47:9) But where the prophetic oracle concludes, because it was placed therein:

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil: he adds to these: If you live in this way, you will have God as gracious and obedient. Therefore, who, with Him standing by you, will boldly attack you? For all things are in His hand; death and life are in the hand of the Lord. Nevertheless, since the afflictions imposed for the sake of faith seemed to some to be evil, the blessed Peter correcting this said: *not repaying evil for evil or insult for insult, but instead blessing*. For the fear awaiting from men should not be regarded, but it lasts only for a very short time, as it comes from those who themselves pass away very quickly.

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, threatening destruction to the wicked. Indeed, if these evils were present, surely the distributor of good things would not allow His beloved ones to be afflicted by evils: for He sends evils upon the wicked. Therefore, these are not evils, but afflictions inflicted for the sake of devotion. Furthermore, God commands “to sanctify Him in the hearts,” as Isaiah says (Is. 8:13): this means, do not glory in those things that appear, but in the hidden treasury of your hearts, working the sanctification of the Lord, which consists in the separation of the nations from their abominations or wicked customs;

thus *sanctify* Him. However, being sanctified, while others glorify Him through your good conduct, just as God and man Himself commands

when He says: "Let your light shine before men," etc. (Matt. 5:16) What is said about being ready is connected to the previous part, for example,

"all of you, be united." The word *"be"* is also attributed to the common understanding, so the meaning is: "May you always be ready." He wants to command that a faithful person should always be prepared regarding the discourse of faith, so that at any time when a reason concerning it is sought from us, we may easily respond;

moreover, in responding, let us do so with *meekness*, as if God Himself were present: no diligent servant would be arrogant in the presence of his master. It also adds the profit that follows from this, namely, the inquiry of the unbelievers and the kindness of the mind towards us. However, it should be noted that these are not contrary to what has been said by the Lord, for He indeed commands not to be anxious about what we should answer when we are brought before rulers and authorities. (Matt. 10:19) Indeed, the Lord's words about martyrdom were spoken, as He also says that virtue and a more powerful discourse should be given than any human wisdom, and that one who despises the surrounding fears: however, Peter's opinion speaks of doctrine. For without understanding and inquiry, it is worthy of reproach to think one knows something. For the knowledge of the foolish is an unprofitable discourse. (Eccles. 21:21) Moreover, since we were accused of various wicked things, and they also showed that our hope was vain, he says that we should bring forth considered responses about these things, having at the same time a proven life, which he certainly calls *conscience*.

"knowing that you were called to this." The order is with the aforementioned structure. In summary, or I may say absolutely, may you all be unanimous and so forth, knowing that you have been called to this, to bless, that is, to bless all. For Paul says: "Bless those who persecute you." (Rom. 12:14) By doing this, you will inherit the name, so that you may be heard by all as those who bless. For it is not just to bring reproach upon anyone who clings to eternal life. Therefore, David also advises to have a pure tongue from reproach for one who is affected with a loving heart towards true life, etc. (Ps. 15:3) Thus, being prepared, you will have the omnipotent and all-seeing inspector kindly observing you, not with a stern or angry mind, as he looks upon those who do evil. If this is the case, *who will harm you?* And if you are afflicted while you are doers

and initiators of good, do not be of little spirit, but rejoice: first of all, because these things are not evil; and also, because *you are blessed* and not miserable because of these things.

Therefore, *sanctify God in your hearts*, and do not be afraid of human fear nor be troubled. But *always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you*. And do this with the demonstration of good actions. For by doing so gently and with kindness, you will confirm that you are well aware of yourselves, and you will shame those who have evil suspicions about you.

"*Having a good conscience*." That is, while you are well aware of yourselves and not evil, as those who slander you are.

"*that when they defame you*." That is, those who create trouble with words, harshly investigating.

3:17-18 *For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil: for Christ also died once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death indeed in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.*

This is the explanation of the cause not relating to what has been said immediately, but to what was mentioned a little earlier, for example: "if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed" (1 Peter 3:14); [now he says] *for it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil*. Or if someone wants to refer to the immediately preceding explanation of the cause: what is said about doing good should not be understood as pertaining to someone else *doing good*, but absolutely, that is, as doing good works. Similarly, it applies to those *doing evil*.

He also adds: "*if that should be God's will*," indicating that nothing happens to us without God's will, but either for the easing of sins, or for our praise and glory, or even for the salvation of others. This happens in two ways. Either a righteous person is afflicted for the

correction of others' sins, as it has been said: If the righteous is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly appear? (1 Peter 4:18; See Proverbs 11:31 LXX) And this also presents twofold usefulness: for the just one who is afflicted, an increase in righteousness due to patience; for the sinner who observes, conversion, as we have said.

Therefore, the just man suffers for these reasons: either for the salvation of others, as Christ did. And for this reason, Peter now adds the example of Christ: *for Christ died* not for His own sins, but for ours.

Therefore, he also adds: *righteous for the unrighteous*. For He, as previously shown through the prophet, had not committed sin. However, showing the effectiveness and power of Him who suffered, he adds: *once*. So great, he says, was the strength of Him who suffered for men, that although He offended many of their sins, the single passion of the Lord was sufficient to overcome all the power of our sins. Therefore, since Christ suffered to bring us to God and His Father, it is shown that not all who suffer do so because of sins. And because Christ is considered in a twofold manner, namely God and man, He also bestowed upon us a double grace. For He died as a man, freeing us from death and corruption, renewing for us the resurrection, and giving by His example, that those dying from this time should not face death without the hope of resurrection.

But made alive, that is, rising from the dead by the power of divinity (for He rose from the dead not as a man, but as God), He simultaneously restored to life all who were in Hades, raising them up together with Himself. Indeed, many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, according to the holy evangelist, and were seen by many. (Matt. 27:52) But when he has proceeded thus far in his discourse and has shown these things, he then proposes how the dead benefited those who had previously slept. At the

same time, with much questioning, if the incarnation of the Lord occurred for the salvation of all men, what kind of salvation did those who had died before receive? He resolves both in one way and says that the death of the Lord accomplished both, namely the hope of action through the fact that he himself has risen, and again the salvation of those who had previously slept. For those who had adorned their lives with good works during the time they lived, just as if Christ had come at that time they would not have been deprived of the preaching that gives life to them, so also at that time through the Lord's descent to Hades they obtained salvation, as it also seems to the divine Gregory⁴. For he himself says: "Does Christ who appeared, namely in Hades, save all simply? Or does he also save those who believed there? For by saying: Those who believed, he signifies that they had prepared themselves in such a way that if he had come even then, they would have believed." Nor do I think this should be rejected. Salvation is not held by inheritance, since although it comes to all the living, it does not save all, but only those who believe. Indeed, it was also the work of the free will of individuals, that since they were rational, they would not behave insensibly towards the magnificence of him who had granted such a gift, but would present themselves as worthy of the goodness of the giver. However, he stated, They had been disobedient, thereby resolving a certain objection. For it was likely that someone would say: And what else before Christ was preached, afterwards were they judged or deemed worthy of condemnation who preceded Christ? And since he could demonstrate this, just as Paul did, from the rational powers dispersed among us, which, when given to them, allowed them to discern between good and evil, and yet they did not act according to good afterwards, such were worthy of death; this does not, however, make it so, for that is of a higher consideration and a deeper philosophy than the mind of the Jews could bear: but it confirms disobedience from Scripture; nor is this from the times of the prophets, but almost from the very beginning of the world:

from which he demonstrates that salvation was preached to men from the beginning, but was despised due to their inclination towards vain and sensual pleasures.

For even in their time, although there were countless wicked men, only eight, who believed what was proclaimed through the preparation of the ark, were saved (1 Peter 3:20). And because salvation was through water, he immediately applies this to the sacred baptism, and says that that water prefigured our baptism, since it also drowns and submerges unbelieving demons and saves the faithful who come to the ark of the Church. At the same time, he says: Just as water washes away filth, so does baptism. But it does not effect the removal of bodily dirt, rather, through a symbol, it demonstrates the washing away of the stains of the soul. It is, moreover, as it were, a pledge and guarantee of a good conscience toward God. For those who are well aware of themselves, that is, who embrace a blameless life and earnestly seek and, as it were, inquire after it (for those who seek something are accustomed to inquire), these also hasten to the sacred baptism. And who, he says, provides that divine baptism should be sought and requested? The resurrection of Christ. For before His resurrection and passion it is shown: “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit;” (Jn. 3:5) but after the resurrection: “Baptizing all nations who come, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matt. 28:19-20) After he concluded the discourse on the dispensation, I speak now of the descent of the Lord into Hades, and for what reason he also went there—namely, that it was for the salvation of those who were in Hades as well. He again takes another occasion from the death of the Lord to exhort to virtue, and says:

If Christ died in the flesh for us (for he could not die in his immortal and divine nature), then surely you also, repaying him in turn, by dying to sin for his sake, will no longer be captivated by human desires, but will live for the rest of your time in the flesh only for the will of God.

“put to death indeed in the flesh” —that is, by the nature of the flesh, that is, the human nature, but rising by the power of divinity. For God is spirit (Jn. 4:24), just as He Himself, the source and wisdom of theology, has taught us.

3:19-22 *In which also he went and preached to the spirits who were in prison, who had formerly been disobedient, when the patience of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. Equivalent to this figure, baptism now saves us, not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the appeal of a good conscience to God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, with angels and authorities and powers made subject to Him.*

"In which also." Here, ἐν ᾧ is taken causally for "therefore." For when he had said that he died for us, the unjust, and from this had shown that he endured death for the salvation of all men, he now says that for this reason also he preached to those who were held in Hades. "Ὁ ἀντίτυπον, etc." (The context of the Greek words here is obscure, and therefore rendered in Latin with more words; yet by rendering the Greek expressions literally, it would be arranged thus:) *that baptism, corresponding to the figures, now also saves you, which is now not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the ἐπερώτημα of a good conscience, which is toward God, or according to God. Furthermore, ἐπερώτημα, that is, to the angels, evidently to the united man.*

CHAPTER 4

On the rejection of wrongful actions and the recovery of fruits in the spirit according to the diversity of gifts.

4:1-5 *Since Christ suffered in the flesh for you, arm yourselves with the same thought: for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in filthiness, lusts, drunkenness, festivities, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. Therefore, it seems strange to them that you do not run with them in the same flood of degeneracy. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*

The order is as follows: Therefore, *since Christ* has died *in the flesh*, you also should arrange yourselves according to *the same thought*: for you have died, namely, to the world: moreover, he who has died *has ceased from sin*, etc.

"*For we have spent.*" Whether we have abundantly operated the will of the Gentiles in our past life: that is, we have lived in a Gentile manner, walking according to the customs of the Gentiles. Therefore, the Gentiles now marvel at this.

"*the same thought.*" That is, according to the same intention and the same purpose. For due to the lack of intention, it is said κατὰ, that is, "according to".

"*he who has suffered in the flesh:*" that is, He has died, saying similar things with Paul: "If we have died with Christ, we shall also live with Him. And indeed we will be dead to sin, but we will live to God." (Rom. 6:8-10)

"*For we have spent.*" As if he were saying: But what? Is it not enough for you that for such a long time you have indulged in *lust*?

Have you not lived in a similarly reckless manner as the Gentiles? And what those *filthiness* and obscenities were, he specifically mentions, confusing them.

"*With drunkenness*," with intemperate desires for wine.

"*Therefore, it seems strange to them.*" They are amazed, that is, they admire. This is what he says: When you have once renounced the pursuits of the Gentiles, which you once lived by, you adhere to the honorable life that you have assumed. For even the Gentiles admire you, that you do not rush into a similar outpouring or confusion of impiety. And therefore, they not only admire and marvel at your *strange* transformation, not only are they ashamed, but they also slander you, that is, they mock you. For divine worship is an abomination to the sinner. However, they will not bear such slander unpunished, but will give an account to the judge of all, who sits unchallengeable and firmly for this very purpose: for this is what it signifies in this place to be prepared: just as when it is said, "Preparing mountains in your strength," (Ps. 65:6) and, "Your throne is prepared." (Ps. 93:2) Therefore, those who slander you will *give an account to him who judges the living and the dead* unchangeably and firmly. How he is the *judge of the living and the dead* will be made manifest in due course.

4:6 *In this cause, the Gospel has also been preached to the dead: that they may be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*

The order is as follows: Those who slander you will give an account to him who judges the living and the dead (1 Peter 4:5): for the dead are also judged; this is evident from the Lord's coming to Hades. For when he went there, namely through his death on the cross, he preached, just as he did to those who were living on earth. However, he preached not by word, but by deed. And just

as he came into the world to those who were ready to recognize him, for justification, but to those who wished to remain ignorant, for condemnation: so also to those who were in Hades. For he came to judgment for those who lived *according to the flesh* in a human manner. But for those who *lived according to the spirit*, that is, according to a spiritual and honorable life, he came for glory and salvation. Therefore, he can rightly be called "the judge of both the living and the dead" (1 Peter 4:5).

So they say. Indeed, the ancient Fathers interpreted this, "*In this cause, the Gospel has also been preached to the dead,*" as a severed part, having no concern for continuity with the preceding, nor for the fact that it ought to be referred to what was said as a cause. For it must have a cause in its statement: but as we said, they interpreted it as an intersection in this way. For the sacred Scripture has said to call the dead in two ways: either those who are dead in sins, who can never see life; or those who have become conformed to the death of Christ, and are indeed dead to the world, that is, to worldly desires, but live only to Christ, as Paul also says: "And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God." (Gal. 2:20) Therefore, they say that those who are thus dead to Christ condemn themselves in the flesh because of their negligent and slothful previous life. This, however, is to live by the spirit or life according to Christ: for the former condemnation makes them more eager regarding the present and what is at hand. And indeed, they are in this way. And although someone might say that these things are rightly so. Nevertheless, what has been said does not entirely hold. However, since it had been said above about those who were in Hades, to whom it was also preached, it is fitting to refer the present discourse to that, which is introduced by reason, and not only to consider, as has now been said. Consequently, we say that because he had said immediately before, "Who is ready to judge the living and the dead" (1 Peter 4:5): an exception could be raised against these: "And where are the living

or where are the dead judged?" He adds faith to the discourse, from what he had said before, that it was also preached to those spirits who were in prison (1 Peter 3:19): and this preaching was made to them for judgment or for condemnation: indeed to those who were conscious of good life, immediately holding to the kindness of him who had appeared there; but to the wicked, filled with shame, and waiting for their own condemnation. Therefore, it confirms that the Lord is the judge of the dead. As for the living, when He came into the world according to mortal life, men had His presence as a condemnation, since the good indeed ran to Him and were instructed, while the wicked rejected Him and willingly abominated the truth: this was indeed their condemnation. Therefore, the Lord also says, "I came into the world for judgment," (Jn. 9:39) that is, for condemnation. Thus, the Lord is the "judge of both the living and the dead": and the rendering of causes will be based on the entire discourse and not on a part.

Therefore, what is said, that they may be *judged in the flesh*, should be understood as when the Lord approached those who were in Hades, those who had lived carnally in the world were condemned: while those who lived spiritually were either brought to life together with the Lord (for many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised Matt. 27:52), or through good hope. Furthermore, it is said that they will be judged and live, taking time for time, namely the future for the past, which is frequent in sacred Scripture. "*The end of all things is at hand*," (1 Peter 4:7) he says, that is, for those who are justified in life and for those who are in Hades. For in the second coming, what is reserved for each will be fulfilled. But if anyone despises the preaching of the Lord in Hades, saying that nothing can benefit the dead, because according to the prophet David, no one confesses in Hades (Ps. 6:6); he understands the preaching in Hades totally and considers confession not as praise of God but as a manifestation: not knowing what is said: "The dead shall not praise you, O Lord" (Ps.

113:17); and it is said: "In Hades, who shall confess to you?" (Ps.4:6) Thus, it should be understood that confession is an act of thanksgiving to God when someone is freed from grave troubles. Therefore, since all things that are dealt with in this present life, where they are completed, come to an end. For the dead, all things are idle: rightly, since no one works anything for whom they would be freed to give thanks, it is said: "In Hades, who shall confess to you?" (Ps. 4:6)

4:7-11 *The end of all things is at hand. Therefore, be sober and watchful in prayer. Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of the diverse grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as if it were the words of God; if anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

The end, that is, completion, consummation or the end of all the prophets is said to be imminent: however, the true word is Christ, for He is the perfection of all. And not as the Greeks rave, who indeed say that pleasure is the end, like Epicurus⁵, while others say wisdom or contemplation or virtue⁶. Therefore, since perfection has come in Christ, Peter also says, having been made conformable to this perfection, present yourselves in all things without defect in sobriety, in vigilance for prayers (for the *prayer* of the *sober* or the *watchful*, and not of those who are held by the drunkenness of worldly things), in *love for one another*. Paul, however, says that this is the change of the law (Rom. 13:10): here indeed that it may *cover sins*. For mercy towards one's neighbor makes God merciful to us. This mercy would never proceed to

what is righteous, unless it is out of great *love*. But where he mentions *love*, he also adds that those who are endowed with love, namely *hospitality*, which he commands to be shown *without complaint*; for this is the essence of true love.

But also concerning the *gifts* that are available to each, they should be shared with the brother who has none: for example, let the one who has the discourse of teaching (for this is what it means by *the words of God*) generously provide for the one who is in need. Let the one who has received the supply of food give to the one who has none: not with a small spirit, but as the power of the expenses given as God permits. Furthermore, he says, I exhort you that in all things, whether among the Gentiles or even in your works, that *God may be glorified*. And when he had spoken thus, since he saw that some were offended because of the afflictions brought upon them, as if a promise of life had been placed in the law from all foreign troubles for those who serve the Lord: indeed, previously when he had made a statement about servants, he gave a brief exhortation about these things: but now he has used a more elaborate discourse and says: *Beloved*, (1 Peter 4:12) immediately signifying by this name that these things do not happen to those who are hated, but to those who are greatly loved. However, do not be surprised, that is, do not marvel, do not consider it *strange* (1 Peter 4:12) from the friends of God. Then, where he also said that afflictions are a *fiery trial*, (1 Peter 4:12) he shows that they are tempted upon them as a test: but the trial makes desirable the one who is tested, just as gold and silver. Moreover, by adding that it is more blessed for all these, namely, those who suffer these things to be conformed to the Teacher Christ: and now to be dishonored with him, so that they may be glorified together with him in the future age, when he has subjected the whole world to himself.

"love covers a multitude." This means persevering and enduring and stretched out over a long period.

"As each one has received a gift." For whatever is placed in us, and of which we are masters to do, can be an accusation of injustice in all these matters. For it is not only in the possession of money, but also in the abundance of other natural goods that one is obliged to give to the one who does not have: so that one may give to the needy.

That from the fellowship with Christ it is necessary to overcome natural adversities, and from hope to bear losses inflicted by others.

4:12-19 *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial that has come upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you: but rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed; for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you: if you are insulted for the name of Christ, it is glorified in you. Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or any kind of criminal, or even as a bigmouth. But if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but glorify God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? Therefore, let those who are afflicted according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator by doing good.*

"the fiery trial that has come upon you." this is how you are proven.

"of the name of Christ." Because you are called Christians.

"if you are insulted." It must be understood: Who, to be. The meaning: Who seems to be blasphemed by the spirit of God among the wicked, but *is glorified in you*. How? Because while

they falsely accuse you, confusion is indeed poured back upon them, but glory upon you.

“even as a bigmouth,” who curiously scrutinizes what belongs to others, in order to have an occasion for slander. This, however, is the disposition of a wicked and deceitful mind, and one that is quick and ready for every evil.

“For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household.” It makes them anxious and terrifies them, driving them away from sloth and a relaxed life; therefore, it also adds: “If the investigation of matters already done begins first with us who are the house of God, what should we think will be the end of those who did not believe? Judgment now does not mean condemnation, but investigation, scrutiny, discussion to choose what is better.” However, let it begin first from the house of God, since, according to our Basil the Great⁷, we are more annoyed towards those who are most familiar to us when they sin against us: but to God, there are no others more familiar than the faithful, who complete the house of God, or the Church. Therefore, the Savior also said: “He will say first to those who will be on his right hand.” (Matt. 25:34) However, this judgment here refers to the examination, namely the afflictions that the wicked bring upon the faithful: of which the Lord also foretold the instigation when He said: “They will hand you over to councils.” etc. (Matt. 5:17)

Then, as if to console them, He adds: *And, If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly.* And this is confirmed by the Scripture which says: “If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (Prov. 11:31) However, this is what Scripture intends to signify: If the righteous attain salvation through labor and affliction (for the kingdom of heaven is taken by violence (Matt. 9:12), and through many afflictions one attains it Acts 14:21), what will those who lead a depraved and indulgent life attain? It must be

understood in the future age regarding what concerns the wicked. Therefore, if this is so, he says,

who are afflicted according to will of God, so that we do not become sluggish, but rather *entrust their souls to a faithful Creator by doing good*. He said, *according to the will of God*, either signifying that our afflictions are not without divine providence but are distributed to us as a test from Him; or that, being afflicted by the will of God, we attribute the outcome to Him. For He is indeed faithful, that is, secure and who does not lie in His promises: nor will He allow us to be afflicted beyond what we can bear. But how should one commit oneself to God? (1 Cor. 10:13)

By *doing good*, he says. And what is that? By the modesty of the soul, committing oneself to Him without exalting oneself because of what one suffers: but the greater the suffering seems, the more firmly one should cling to Him, so that one considers oneself useless and says, "for you are righteous in all the things that you have done to us." (Dan. 3:27) Moreover, the wicked and the sinner differ in this respect: for the wicked is completely alien to God, while the sinner clings to God somewhat, but as one who despises Him and transgresses His laws. However, one can be both wicked and a sinner: for whoever works iniquity acts wickedly, in that he sins, thinking that God does not exist.

CHAPTER 5

Admonition of the priests concerning the care and visitation of the flock: in which it also addresses the common modesty of all towards individuals, for victory against the Devil.

5:1-6 *I encourage the elders who are among you, I who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker*

of the glory that will be revealed: feed the flock of Christ that is among you, exercising oversight not under coercion, but willingly; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; nor exercising dominion against the clergy, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God.

Since he proposes to discuss the modesty of the spirit, which he even touches upon while speaking about “doing good”, (1 Peter 4:19) and now calling himself a co-elder, that is, both an elder together with them. Through this, he designates either his own age or the honor of bishops. For it is known that bishops are also called elders, as the book of Acts indicates. (Acts 20:17;28) Then, wishing to demonstrate his own eminence, and that he calls himself a co-elder for the sake of modesty, he adds his dignity:

"*witness of the sufferings of Christ:*" wanting to signify through this: If I, who am an interpreter of such visions to you, do not contempt to call myself a co-elder, neither should you, who are righteous, be exalted against those who are inferior to you. Therefore, Christ, teaching this precept of modesty, thus pronounces: "If therefore I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet." (Jn. 13:14)

Furthermore, "*a partaker of the glory that will be revealed,*" to demonstrate the excellence of a modest spirit: just as Paul says, "When Christ is manifested, then we will also be manifested." (Col. 3:1)

Moreover, he does not *feed the flock coercively*, who, by presenting himself as an example of good conduct to his subordinates, has disciples who mutually encourage each other to imitate their teacher: Nor does he seek *for shameful gain*, who

walks not arrogantly nor raises himself against those under him, but converses humbly, maintaining a constant frugality that requires no expense for costly garments or a lavish table, which receives pride with applause and seeks expense from shameful gain.

He calls the *clergy* a sacred assembly, just as we do even now. Furthermore, by adding,

"but being examples to the flock," he instructs that they should not feed the flock as if coercively.

Furthermore, when it is said, *"And when the chief Shepherd appears,"* it is a conjunction. And it is informally placed for "So that": that is, *"So that when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."* Just as in Psalm 89, when it is said, *"And look upon your servants and upon your works."* For there "And" is placed in the place of "Because of which." *"Εγκομβώσασθε"* indeed means, "surround yourselves, embrace."

5:6-9 *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the Devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.*

It is added, *"In time."* For it refers to the exaltation in the future age, which is the only true exaltation, as unchangeable and everlasting, since the present exaltation is neither secure nor firm, but rather contributes to a perpetual humiliation, so that it may be humbled more quickly than it was exalted. Furthermore, the Lord Himself is suitable to reconcile humiliation with exaltation. For He says: "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Matt. 18:4) And: "Whoever wishes to be first among you shall be the last of all."

(Matt. 20:27) And speaking at that time, he indicated, as we said, that in the future, the exaltation promised would arise from humiliation. For there will be a time of unchangeable things in the future and in the incorruptible age. For the incorruptible has nothing mortal or perishable. Then, removing the fear that would arise from humiliation (for perhaps he saw some fearing that by humbling themselves in this present life, they would suffer some evil), he said: "Do not be afraid, *casting all your anxiety on the Lord*, when you have entrusted yourself to him who will take careful and diligent *care of you*."

"*because he cares for you*," or concern is placed upon him regarding all these things.

"*Be sober-minded; be watchful*." On those who are spiritually asleep (this, however, is to aspire to vain things) and from this, the watchfulness of souls is weighed down, the evil and most savage beast of despair is accustomed to leap upon them. Therefore, Christ's disciple, strengthening us (Matt. 13:24), exhorts us to always be vigilant and to watch over him who sows tares, lest in any way, while we are asleep, or living carelessly and sluggishly, he secretly sows wicked thoughts and drives us away from true life.

For the Devil does not cease, Peter says, *prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour*; to whom you also resist with firm strength of mind. Concerning such sharp snares and the precise deceit of him against us, the holy Justin Martyr⁸ also brings forth the case, stating that the Devil did not clearly know the power of his punishment before the coming of the Lord, when the divine prophets had announced it mysteriously: just as Isaiah (14:4), under the persona of the Assyrian, tragically narrates the entire representation of the Devil. But when the Lord had come and had openly said that the eternal fire is reserved and prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41), upon hearing this, he

does not cease to lie in wait for the faithful, wanting to have many companions in his defection, lest he be ashamed to cling to this alone, applauding himself with this cold and envious consolation.

"knowing that the same kinds of suffering," as it is likely, those to whom Peter writes were being pressed by many afflictions for the sake of Christ: therefore, both in the preceding and in the following, he brings consolation to this: indeed, by the fact that the enduring become themselves partakers of the afflictions of Christ and heirs of the glory that is to be revealed; here, however, by the fact that they do not suffer alone, but all the faithful who are in the world: moreover, the company of companions lightens the severity.

5:10-14 *But the God of all grace, who has called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. By Silvanus, a faithful brother to you, as I consider, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. The Church that is in Babylon, elected together with you, greets you, and Mark my son. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

And beginning the letter, he said that the Father, for the sake of the Son, have mercy on us, and now concluding, he teaches to call the same Father through the Son: for this is their aim to preach the mystery, although they do this with exhortation.

"By Silvanus." This Silvanus was very faithful and eagerly motivated around the preaching. Indeed, Paul also mentions him and takes him as a helper along with Timothy in his letters, saying: "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy." (1-2 Thess. 1:1)

He calls Rome *Babylon*, because it was so remarkable and distinguished, as it had been for a long time in Babylon.

He calls his *son Mark* according to the spirit, and not according to the flesh. To him, he entrusted the task of writing the Gospel. However, some have dared to assert that Mark was the son of the divine Peter according to the flesh, using as an argument what was said by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles. (Acts 12:1) For he says that Peter was miraculously brought out of prison by the angel of God, in which Herod had kept him, and after being released from the angelic conversation, he came to the house of the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, as if he had come to his own house and to his lawful wife. However, when Paul writes that they should greet each other with a holy kiss (2 Cor. 14:12), Peter says here,

"With a kiss of love," saying the same as that. For Paul (1 Cor. 13:1-19) knows the love which is according to Christ and is greater than all virtues, even than martyrdom itself suffered for Christ. Therefore, he calls the holy kiss separate and defined in God, while he similarly refers to the kiss of love which is true love, which Paul has praised. Therefore, he also adds:

"Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus:" not speaking of the common peace which is among men, which is dear to men because of the affection for vain glory and the enjoyment of pleasures, to which those who are free from war surrender themselves; but he prays that they may attain the peace which Christ himself agreed to grant them as he proceeded to passion, saying: "My peace I leave with you;" and adding a distinction: "Not as the world gives." (Jn. 14:27) For peace is not to be sought because of affection, but that we may be united in love, in order to receive in this way the blows of adversaries. Moreover, the disciples of the Lord, adding as it were a seal, bring a prayer at the end, as a

genuine sign of their holiness. (It was written from the city of Rome.)

2 PETER

HYPOTHESIS OF THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF PETER

Again, Peter writes to those already believing. This letter, however, is a reminder of the former one. For when he knew that the ending of his body would soon come, he was eager to admonish everyone concerning the teaching by which they had been instructed. And first epistle indeed he explains faith, showing that it was announced by the prophets and that the prophecies which speak of the Savior are not human, but have been proclaimed by God. Then he warns them not to pay attention to deceivers, saying that their destruction will be forthcoming, just as it happened to the transgressing angels. He also foretells in the letter that there will be days when mockers will come, wanting to seduce some, saying that the coming of the Lord is to be regarded as a vain thing, since it is always said and it has not yet come. Therefore, he especially commands to be separated from these, teaching that times should not be neglected: since all time is nothing before God, because one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. He confirms and shows that the day of the Lord will be forthcoming, and he commands that all of them to be prepared for it through good works, and to embrace what has been written by the apostle Paul, and not to pay attention to those who slander it, since all also slander the divine Scriptures. Therefore, having suggested and taught all to foresee in matters,

he urges them not to fall away from the purpose of faith, and so concludes the letter.

THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF PETER.

SECTIONS

1. Of calling confirmed by faith through works that are in virtue and hope of future goods.
2. Exhortation to the reminder of doctrine, recalling it to memory: and how on Mount Tabor he heard the voice of God concerning Christ.
3. Prophecy concerning the fraudulent rebellion of heretics, their wickedness, and the future punishment.
4. Repetition of the wickedness of heretical men: in which it is also discussed how Christ will suddenly come at the end of this age: therefore it is said that one must be adorned with every virtue.

PETER THE APOSTLE

THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE

CHAPTER 1

Of calling confirmed by faith through works that are in virtue and hope of future goods.

1:1-2 *Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. May grace and*

peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

"Simon." It is also written as Simeon. For Simon is short for Simeon: just as from Metrodoros we have Metras, from Menodoros we have Menas, and from Theodosios we have Theudas. Immediately from the beginning, he lifts the minds and souls of believers, inspiring them to equal diligence in preaching with the apostles.

For it is not just *that those who have obtained a faith of equal standing* should be in any way inferior to those who have been declared to be equals. Moreover, he receives them everywhere with *peace*, not that which is of the world, but that which is rooted *in the knowledge of God*. For this alone is called *peace*, as it frees us from offense and hatred toward God. Therefore, Christ also grants this to us as he departs to the Father, and when he rose from the dead, he proclaimed, "Peace be with you." (Jn. 14:27; 20:19,21,26) And in the churches, we pray that the angel of peace may be given to us: and the priest frequently grants this to the people from the altar: we also use this in our mutual addresses, that this is the mother of all good things, and the substance of our joy. Therefore, Christ commanded His disciples to first offer this divinely as they entered homes: (Luke 10:5) "Grace to you and peace."

The order is as follows: *May grace and peace be multiplied to you*, as all things that pertain to life and godliness, *in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord*, since by His divine power this grace has been granted to you, the knowledge, glory, and virtue of Him: through which the greatest promises have been given: that you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

"In the knowledge of God." Otherwise: To you who have equally been honored with us in the knowledge of God and of our Lord

Jesus Christ, *may grace and peace be multiplied through the righteousness of our God.* Or this is the order: In the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, which knowledge has been granted through His divine power, everything that pertains to life and godliness, and that very knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which glory and virtue precious and magnificent promises have been granted, so that you may become partakers of the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, applying all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, and to self-control perseverance, and to perseverance godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love (2 Peter 1:3).

1:3-9 *As all things are given to you by His divine power, which pertains to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His glory and virtue, by which precious and great promises have been granted to you, so that through these you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue, to virtue, knowledge, to knowledge, self-control, to self-control, perseverance, to perseverance, godliness, to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love. For if these things are with you and abound, you will be neither idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.*

Indeed, a long series has been presented, and this is the understanding: Just as countless good things have been received through the appearance of Christ, *by which we may become partakers of the divine nature* and be led back to life and

godliness: so we must conduct ourselves, so that we may support *virtue* through *faith*, and by this means progress towards the promotion of *godliness*, until we reach the perfection of *diligence*, which is *love*. Moreover, we have *become partakers of the divine nature* through the coming of the Lord and God, who took the first fruits of our nature upon Himself and sanctified it by assuming it. If the first fruits are holy, the mass is also holy. Furthermore, the mass of the first fruits is nothing other than those from which the first fruits come. However, he speaks of *the corruption* that comes from worldly lust, as if it were concerning the corruptible and those things that are corruptible.

The step leads to promotion: first indeed *faith*, which is the foundation and basis or principle of good things.

Then in the second step *virtue* or works, for without this faith is dead, as James (2:26) says.

After this indeed is *knowledge*. What is this? The knowledge of the secrets of God's mysteries, which does not happen to everyone, but to one who is exercised in the habit of better works.

After this is *self-control*. For this is also necessary for one who has reached the measure, lest he become wanton due to the greatness of the gift. Since it does not happen that one who uses self-control for a short time can firmly possess the gift (for they always desire afflictions to lead them to what is worse), having entered into tolerance completes the whole matter and appeases *godliness*, producing a more perfect assurance in God: therefore from *godliness*, *brotherly love* is sought, which does not approach unless *kindness* grants access to all things of *godliness*. And above all, the fulfillment of all good things is *love*, as it seems to both Paul (Rom. 13:13) and the Truth. For this has both the Son of God and His Father prevailed: indeed, that He might give Him as a beloved Son, but the Son to pour out His blood for us.

"For if these things are with you and abound." What are these? *Faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love*, which must not only be present but also *abound*. For if presence is beneficial, much more is abundance or wealth. What, then, is the benefit that follows from these? To have security for the second coming of the Lord. For indeed, to those to whom these are not present, in the glory of the coming Judge, and in the manner of the shining sun, *blindness* follows. Where, even if it is strong in appearance, it cannot be gazed upon without injury by the exaggeration of those who are weak-eyed, since it was born shining in its own light in such a way that it blinds those who rely on it with feeble sight. But the word Μωωπάζειν is used to mean, ἀπὸ τῶν μυῶν, that is, from the moles living underground, who remain blind to everything.

"has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins." This is similar to what was said by blessed James: "For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer: he shall be compared to a man beholding his natural face in a mirror. For he saw himself, and went his way." (James 1:23-24) For when he had known that he had been cleansed by holy baptism, because he had been washed from the multitude of sins, he ought to have known that it is necessary to be vigilant in order to maintain his purity and sanctity, without which no one will see God (Heb. 12:14): but he indeed forgot.

Exhortation to the reminder of doctrine, recalling it to memory: and how on Mount Tabor he heard the voice of God concerning Christ.

1:10-15 *Therefore, brothers, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble. For in this way, an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior*

Jesus Christ. Therefore, I will not neglect to remind you always of these things, even though you know and are established in the present truth. Yet I think it right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover, I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my departure.

Therefore, he says, my brothers, make every effort to confirm your calling and election as permanent and unchangeable, that is, the teaching you heard regarding your election and calling, so that you may be blameless: do not be judged as if you have forgotten the gift of God, but remain steadfast having your calling secure.

"For if you do these things." What are these? Those which have been predicted, namely virtue, knowledge, temperance, and the other things that follow. Notice, however, how orderly it is that those things which were fearsome are now directed through good to the entrance of the eternal kingdom of the Lord.

"even though you know." So that they are not seen to be continually admonished about the same things, as if rebuked for living in idleness, and thus become saddened, for this reason he adds: *even though you know and are established in the present truth.* Moreover, giving a reason for the continuous admonition, he added that he knew a release from this body would soon come.

What is suggested, for example: *"I will be careful to ensure that you always,"* some understand through a reversal of a word order in this way: I will take care and after my departure, you will always have or continuously the memory of these things: wanting to show from this that even after the death of the saints, they remembered what they accomplished here for the living. Others, however, simply treating that saying, understand it thus: I will take care and you will always have after my departure the last mention of these things: that is, do not be surprised, nor consider it

burdensome that there is a constant mention made to you about these matters. For I do not do this condemning your ignorance, but by a continuous teaching about these things, I present to you this support, so that, being strengthened by these, you may also have after my death a living and permanent teaching about these matters.

1:16-21 *For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was brought to him by the majestic glory: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this very voice brought from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day approaches and the morning star rises in your hearts. Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

When Peter had said that they should diligently attend to themselves, and that those things which had been announced to them were indeed so, and he had explained this at length, frequently: although he knew and they had heard in various ways, he now adds their confirmation and says: I do not apply a vain diligence to these matters, but since I know the truth of them to be certain and undoubted, I dwell on them. And what is this?

We made known to you the power and coming of our Lord, not by human wisdom with adorned speeches, as if deceiving your hearing with tricks, as the Greeks and heretics do: indeed, the Greeks using elaborate speech and deception; the heretics,

however, with fabricated words: just as the Valentinians fleeing into profound depths and silence⁹. For it is likely that they were beginning to arise. Therefore, there is nothing of this kind to be found in us, but we have delivered to you the teaching in a simple and humble manner: which Paul also says to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 2:1): and those things which we have from the sight of our own eyes, we who ascended with him to *the holy mountain*. Peter says, however, that the Lord showed them *on the holy mountain* the glory of the Only Begotten (Matt. 17:1), and the voice that they heard from the Father brought down from heaven concerning the Lord. Moreover, since we have known through the things themselves and experience what was proclaimed by the prophets, he says, we judge their prophecy to be *more sure* through these things: for the things themselves have followed the sayings and oracles.

Therefore, *the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention*, whether those that were foretold by the prophets: although they were then spoken obscurely by them, and *as to a lamp shining in a dark place*. For such is the filthy place, scorched by the heat of the sun and deprived of the air that informs it with moisture. Hence, it is necessary that the air which serves the solar ray, when it is in danger of losing its property, should render itself an illegitimate servant to the sun, and the ray, as if carried by an illegitimate vehicle, should present a darkened splendor of itself. However, by attending to those things which were thus obscurely spoken by the prophets, you will not be deceived in your hope, for things, Peter says, will come to pass in their own time: which he also aptly called day, remaining very skillfully in the figure of speech.

For Peter said, "*as to a lamp shining in a dark or gloomy place, which is also night.*" However, day succeeds every night. Therefore, *as day approaches* (I speak of the presence of things), you will have *the Morning Star* rising in your hearts: that is, the

knowledge of Christ, or his presence and coming foretold by the prophets, illuminating your hearts like true *light*.

Then, in explaining, Peter adds why his words were not interpreted as private or personal: at the same time, he also distinguishes true prophecy from demonic and false prophecies, which are found to operate in heretics, and says: "*that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.*" That is, indeed, the prophets receive prophecy from God, but not as they wish, but as the divine Spirit works in them moving them: and they certainly knew and understood the prophetic message sent to them, yet they did not make the interpretation themselves. That the prophets, moved by the divine Spirit, knew how the Spirit was sent to them from God is evident from the fact that they spoke voluntarily and said what they wished, while they remained silent on what they did not want to say; just as the prophet Jonah, refusing to preach in Nineveh (Jonah 1:3), and Balaam (Num. 22:13), commanded to speak what was suggested to him. However, the false prophets or the oracles of the Greeks did not have this: for they did not know while they were being agitated, but, having become mad with frenzy, they were unaware of what was happening to them, as if they were drunk.

Therefore, the holy prophets, I say the ancients, although they understood, did not, however, have to interpret what they predicted, but they served these things to others, namely to us. Likewise, so that the Lord's coming might remain hidden, and that traps might not be prepared for Him by the wicked. Indeed, even if the power of God could escape from assaults, it is likely that through extraordinary means of escape, the incarnation would appear as if it were a miraculous event. And that this is true is evident from the prophets who were in the New Testament, who also interpreted themselves while prophesying, although not in all cases, as the blessed Paul says in his earlier letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 14:21); for there was no such suspicion in the

New Testament. Furthermore, it is also clear that the prophets did not prophesy outside of themselves.

When they prophesied with one spirit, both those in the Old Testament and those in the New, Paul says: "If, however, something is revealed to another sitting there, let the first be silent." (1 Cor. 14:30) From this, it is evident that the prophets, remaining in their natural consistency, prophesied spontaneously and intelligently. Therefore, when another rises to whom inspiration has been given, the one who was speaking first is commanded to be silent; which could not be found among mad prophets. For how will he be silent who does not even know what he is doing? Paul himself says that the energy of the Holy Spirit is in the prophets, speaking thus: "To one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of prophecy." (1 Cor. 12:8)

Furthermore, here through the things that are now proposed. "*For he received from God the Father.*" This participle λαδὼν is either placed in the position of the indicative verb ἔλαθεν, that is, *he received*: since according to the consequence of the participle, the discourse does not subsequently correspond. Or if this is not pleasing, but someone wishes to take λαδὼν as a proper participle, the discourse will necessarily fall into disorder: if, however, the participle is taken in place of the indicative verb, it will be consistent with what is added, for example: *For he received glory from God the Father*: and from this we have more firmly whatever has been announced about this by the prophets before: not that any prophecy was delivered from the voice of the Father from on high, but that we have been confirmed by the heavenly voice of the Father which testified that he is the Son, so that all the prophecy of the prophets undoubtedly carries testimony from the Father.

"*Here is my beloved Son.*" (Matt. 3:17) Three times the Father testified to the Son: at baptism, at the passion when He said, "And

I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again" (Jn. 12:28); and *on the holy mountain*.

"*Knowing this first of all,*" etc. The prophets knew those things which were inspired in them by the prophetic spirit, and about which, however, they did not know exactly how each would be fulfilled. Therefore, understanding, they desired to see the outcome of these things: as the Lord also says.

CHAPTER 2

Prophecy concerning the fraudulent rebellion of heretics,
their wickedness, and the future punishment.

2:1-3 *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their obscene ways, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.*

Since prophecy is a common name that refers to both prophets and false prophets, it confirms that false prophets should not be regarded. And Paul differs slightly from this, as he teaches that no one says Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:3) Therefore, he begins to oppose the heresy against the Nicolaitans, saying that their wickedness is twofold. For they are indeed most impious in doctrine, as their blasphemy against the Lord Christ demonstrates; however, their life is especially *obscene*. And this he now signifies through shameful gain; however, having progressed a little, he will state it more openly. For now he refers

to πλεονεξίαν, that is, *greed*, signifying shameful gain. For πλεονεξία sometimes signifies injustice, but at other times simply gain. Hence, showing that he speaks more particularly, he added:

"*they will exploit you.*" Completely alienating them from divine doctrine, he said they would use *false words*. But they will have, he says, the wages of impiety, namely death. Moreover, it is already an indication of the foreknowledge of God. For just as through foreknowledge He prepared good things for the good, so also a fitting place for the wicked.

"*who secretly,*" etc. The order: Those who, summoning *swift destruction upon themselves*, will secretly lead destructive sects; and *denying the Lord who bought them*, and through greed negotiating with *false words* about you.

"*is not asleep.*" He does not cease, nor will he be idle, sluggish, or ineffective.

2:4-7 *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them into chains of gloomy Tartarus¹⁰, delivering them to be kept for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction, reducing them to ashes, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked—for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds.*

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, nor the ancient world, but condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction, reducing them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; indeed, He preserved

Noah, the preacher of righteousness, when He brought the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and likewise Lot, who was oppressed by the wicked, when the Sodomites were seeking to abuse the angels who had been received as guests (Gen. 19), and who was daily admonished to emulate their wicked deeds, then tormented his own soul through soberness, and by abstaining from them, He rescued him: will He not much more deliver at this time those who are destined for destruction, just as He did the transgressing angels and those who were in the time of the flood, and furthermore the Sodomites? But you who dwell in the world along with them, will He not preserve you, just as He did Noah and Lot who then lived among the ungodly? No one doubts that He will indeed do so. For He knows how to rescue the godly from temptations and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment. Note, however, that when he previously presented the example of the wicked, he now ordains that which is about the righteous: by this, he also consoles the imitators of the righteous, who are considered superior to the impious. Therefore, Christ also gives the reward first to the just sheep who are on the right, and then to the goats who are on the left, punishments. (Matt. 25:34-41) Since delightful things are preferred over sad ones.

"God did not spare the angels who sinned." He attacks those who were first cut off and says: If the angels who were in honor with God because of the immortality of their substance, when they had shaken off the yoke, sinned, they did not obtain forgiveness: much less will God spare men who cling to their own creation if they have sinned,

"But chains of gloomy." This signifies the inevitability of condemnation. For with such *chains*, we certainly punish those condemned by us. But someone may say: Whence is such condemnation of the demons evident? From the demons themselves, for they plead in the Gospel (Luke 8:31) not to be cast into the abyss, as if all others might also suffer this. It must be

understood, however, that although the argument is presented in a hypothetical manner, it is not truly so; for it has nothing else to respond to later, but is proposed only in appearance, while in truth it is a simple persuasive example: and for this reason, it will be said: for if it were as it seems, it would proceed thus: If angels, having sinned, were not spared, nor the ancient world, nor Sodom and Gomorrah, would He spare these? Certainly not; or even in this way: He will not spare them at all. However, He does not rashly approach those who are more distinguished; but wishing to show that these, while they sin, are more liable to punishment. Therefore, since these also hold a more honorable rank, as they are called to the apostleship, when they have fallen from the divine way, they also have a greater condemnation. From the hypothesis moved by a persuasive example, it did not provide what corresponded to the figure. For he confounded the example of the assumption of the righteous: and when he should have responded in speech to what was proposed from the beginning, namely to those who had sinned, for whom the example was also assumed, and say: If he did not spare these, will he spare the wicked and the wanton present? Or by affirmation: Much more will he not spare these: he does not do this. Why? Because when two examples are proposed, namely of the good and the evil, this response of speech was found only to respond to the evil, not to the good: for the good do not receive evil.

Therefore, since a single response of speech was not sufficient to fulfill the proposed matter, it remained in another way in phrasing, and completed what was necessary through an interjection. But why he mixed examples of good with bad ones will be explained in a suitable place.

"But the eighth person," etc. As we have previously stated, it follows not only from what is evident in the discourse, but also from their understanding of what is proposed. For the response of the discourse is not one that usually follows such arrangements,

but is a simple persuasive example, concerning those who are punished for their sins, and those who are honored for their righteousness: as if to say; The Lord knows how to punish sinners without sparing them, just as He did the angels who sinned, as well as those who were in the time of the flood, like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; again, to honor those who practice righteousness, such as Noah and Lot. And this is the arrangement: Having said that false teachers are to be punished for their blasphemies and their lustful lives, he adds examples.

For God did not spare the angels who sinned, nor the ancient world, nor did He spare the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah from destruction, but they are reduced to ashes, serving as a punishment for the ungodly. Again, God knows how to honor those who exercise justice, just as He did with Noah and Lot: and for the righteousness of each, it is narrated that both Noah and Lot were preserved from the destruction of the men who lived during their time because of their soberness and chastity. For they were not taken away from the impiety of those who were before the flood.

Lot also did not follow the carnality of those who lived in Sodom, but as if provoked daily by the sight of those who acted impolitely, he was stirred to the same boldness, yet he did not succumb in any way. For this means, "with seeing and hearing," (2 Peter 2:8) that he had many things that could provoke him to boldness, *sight, hearing*, conversation among the wicked; but he neither delivered the angels, his guests, in the appearance of men, to those who sought them because of their impudence, although he suffered violence from them in countless ways. For this is indicated by saying that he was oppressed. And as figure of speech, he adds: "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly," etc. (2 Peter 2:9) However, since he had not forewarned anything about the righteous, but only about the wicked and their punishment, he also scatters examples of the righteous in this place: first, indeed, because the history simultaneously mentions both the destruction

of the wicked and the salvation of the righteous; then, moreover, from this comparison, he amplifies the malice of those who sinned, and makes the good works of those who conducted themselves excellently clear. Furthermore, Peter persuades the listeners to indeed hate the shamelessness of those, but to embrace the noble work of these for the sake of salvation. Hence, he also mentions in a figure of speech, both the pious and the impious, and salvation and punishment. Moreover, what he wants from this has already been stated, namely that he desires for them to hate the wickedness of those, but to emulate the salvation of these. "For the just is with sight and hearing." Although he had many things that inflamed, stimulated, and invited to shamelessness—eyes, ears, and conversation among the wicked—he was not, he says, led to the imitation of them.

2:9-13 *The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, but to keep the unjust for the day of judgment, especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of pollution and despise authority: bold, brave, who do not fear to speak evil of dignitaries: whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord. But like irrational brute creatures, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming in matters they do not understand, they will perish in their own corruption, receiving the wages of unrighteousness, as they count it pleasure to party in the daytime.*

"especially those who walk according to the flesh." Therefore, it cleverly comes from the aforementioned examples to the present argument. He speaks, however, of the curses of the Nicolaitans or Gnostics, or Naassenes or Cerdonians, for their wickedness has taken on various names: and as with their wicked deeds, so too is it found to be confused with names. For these, as we have said, having taken on depth and silence, narrate marvelously the first

works of the world's existence and certain mothers and ages, just as Marcion who took corrupt seeds from these: then, through this, repulsed from the dominance of institution and oversight or governance of the world, they boldly arrived at all fleshly immorality. But if anyone wishes to learn about these things, taking in hand the book composed by the blessed man Irenaeus of Gaul (Book 1, cap. 1,8-9), which he titled Against Heresies, he will find the impurities of these, especially because of Marcus, the most obscene man, and those who were seduced by him, as well as the corrupted miserable women, "Audacious, reckless." It must be understood who they are. Therefore, rejecting the Overseer or Governor and Creator of the world, it is no wonder that such audacious and reckless individuals are pursuing their own pleasures. But he also speaks of revilers. For those who do not fear *authority* out of contempt, what is surprising if they also stand boldly against all splendor? However, the blessed Apostle Jude speaks more openly about these things, where he also makes mention of the body of Moses. (Jude 9)

Now, Peter only hinted at this matter in passing, touching upon it and calming the discussion. Therefore, taking this occasion to speak about those things that are proposed, we say that "*do not fear to speak evil of dignitaries*," that is: they scornfully attack all exceptional dignitaries with curses. And wishing to restrain their boldness regarding such matters, he says: "*whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord*," saying the same as blessed Jude, as we have said: since he too, restraining the crabbiness and nonsense of certain tongues, made a warning from the same example, and he says more broadly: "Michael the archangel," etc., "did not dare to bring a railing accusation." (Jude 9) Therefore, this is what Peter also wishes to say now, that these evil spirits spare nothing in hurling curses at the dignitaries. However, those indeed who are greater in power and might, namely these unclean

ones, do not bring or utter a railing accusation against them, that is, the dignitaries, before the Lord. And of this, Michael the archangel is a witness. For indeed, the Devil also shares in some glory, in that he is the beginning of the creation of the Lord, he did not bring forth a slanderous accusation against him. There is also a more effective argument in this way: For if the Devil, who is more worthy to receive accusations, nevertheless participates in splendor, this was not achieved by Michael before the Lord; it would be utterly unwise for those who rashly attack all splendor or those adorned with splendor with insults, since they are far inferior in honor to the angels; however, he speaks of dignitaries, whether divine virtues or even ecclesiastical principalities, which these most obscene ones do not cease to attack even with curses.

And indeed the angels in this way. *"But like irrational brute creatures,"* that is, living only by sense, not likewise by mind and intellectual life: for which reason they are easily captured by corruptible things, that is, by the movement in a corrupt life: the excitement of the soul and the desire acted upon and drawn, in those things which they are ignorant of or in their spontaneous ignorance bringing in curses, *they will perish in their own corruption, receiving the wages of unrighteousness*, that is, that which they have acquired for themselves.

"for the sake of pleasure as they count it pleasure to party in the daytime ." Indeed, they truly desire, placing true and desirable joy and pleasure in the daily enjoyment of the palate. Therefore, it should be known that when sacred Scripture reproaches something, it assimilates to brute beings those things which naturally happen to men, that is, those which occur to them as animals, saying: "Man, when he was in honor, did not understand; he was compared to the senseless beasts (Ps. 48:37);" and: "Do not be like a horse and a mule (Ps. 31:9);" and: "The horses became mad for the mares (Jer. 5:8);" and: "Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves (Matt. 5:16);" not that by saying this it

changes natures, for that is impossible, but it invites them to avoid these indeed natural inclinations of theirs, while embracing those naturally. When, however, it prescribes something salutary, it transmits the likeness to better things: as when it says: "Be merciful as your heavenly Father," (Luke 6:26) not even here transforming nature, but commanding to do this as much as virtue suggests.

2:13b-16 *Spots and blemishes party in their errors against you, having eyes full of adultery, and who cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having hearts exercised with covetous practices, accursed children, who have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for his iniquity [Num. 22:6]: the dumb beast speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.*

"*Spots and blemishes.*" The order is taken as follows: *Spots and blemishes* are the heart of those who are exercised in plunder, that is, exercised through plunder, *accursed children*, assaulting you, *having eyes full of adultery, and who cannot cease from sin*: they entice *unstable souls*, which Paul also called women burdened with sins. (2 Tim. 3:6) Furthermore, these *have forsaken the right way, and have gone astray following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor*, and the rest. These are wells without water, clouds carried with a tempest, etc. (2 Peter 2:17) And why is darkness reserved for them in the future world? Because of their immense vanity, by which they entice those who had previously walked in error, and had truly fled from it: so that through filthiness and the desires of the flesh, they return like a dog to its vomit. (Prov. 26:11) But those who are placed in the middle declare and confirm this vanity.

"*Stains and blemishes.*" They have nothing that is fixed in purity, but like stains on a clean garment, they cling to long-standing conversation and defile everything: when they have drawn some away and have been able to make them shameless, those who are together, men and women, they consider this act a delight, satisfying their own lust: but also, they say, those who are dining with you do this not out of love, or because they share (as they say) in salt¹¹, but to find this time suitable for deception among women. For these, having eyes, look at nothing but adulteresses, and in this, they sin continually, like children of abomination or abominable ones, ensnaring unstable souls.

Having hearts exercised with covetous practices, whether of filthiness or even of possessions, for which both, abandoning the way that would lead them to salvation, have strayed from it: and the same happened to them as to *Balaam the son of Beor*, since he also *loved the wages of unrighteousness* for the sake of the gifts offered: but he *was rebuked for his iniquity*, namely by a *dumb beast* of burden, which *speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet*. And from this, therefore, we learn that Balaam, because of the affection of his desire, which he nourished with his insane prophecy, once prohibited by God, was again hastening to go to Balak steadfastly: but hindered by the fear of God, and by the terrors that met him on the way, he did not change the word of blessing, which was not of divination (for we have said that divination is uttered by a raging mind, and those things are said by one who is ignorant), but of prophecy. Indeed, the prophets speak knowing what they say. Hence, he called the prophet himself, as one who knows what he should say. For he certainly did not choose better while ignorant of what he was saying: therefore, the blessing was not of divination, but of the power of God.

2:17-22 *These are the springs lacking water, the clouds carried by the storm, by which the darkness of gloom has been preserved for eternity. Indeed, where the proud words of vanity have sounded, they ensnare through the lusts of the flesh in their desires, those who have truly fled, who were wandering in error, while promising them freedom, when they themselves are slaves of corruption. For by whom anyone is overcome, to him he is also enslaved. For if, after having fled from the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled and overcome, the latter end has become worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than having known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: A dog returns to its own vomit, and a pig, having washed, to her rolling in the mud.*

While Peter was saying many things, among which he also brought up the example of Balaam, he again took up the discourse about the impure Gnostics, and compared them to sources *lacking water*, as those who have lost the water of life, that is, the purity of preaching and drinkable water: which when the Lord had, he promised that he would satisfy many who came to it. (Jn. 1:6) But he also compared them to *clouds carried by the wind*, in a contrary manner: for this reason, he also called the wind a *storm*, as one that turns and disturbs what is agitated: for this is what a *storm* usually does. Therefore, they are not radiant clouds like the saints, but mists full of darkness. (Isa. 60:2)

“*by which the darkness of gloom has been preserved for eternity*” (but it is said to be eternal judgment); and for what reason? He added the cause, that through *proud words* stemming from *vanity*, *they ensnare* those who have truly fled and who once wandered in error through fleshly desire in corruption. Therefore, those who commit these acts are subject to impurities, arrogance, and impiety.

But also, Peter says, since they are of the aforementioned filth, which he rightly calls *corruption*, they promise *freedom* to those who are deceived, not indeed of true life, but of that which is according to indulgence. Therefore, he also adds a reason why they are *slaves* of sin, saying something remarkable, that whoever is led astray by any passion is also bound to this in slavery. Then Peter again confirms this with another example, showing how one who is overcome by someone else is also a *slave* to him, and he makes an argument based on this assumption.

"*For if, after having fled.*" In the present discourse, Peter strives to establish two things: that it is necessary for the one who is overcome to serve the one by whom he is overcome; and that those who, after the recognition of the Truth, embrace again the former things, fall into worse conditions than the evil things they previously experienced. He also adds a *proverb* for support. Therefore, the entire discourse should be arranged in this way: For if, after *the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*, they have fled from the pollutions of the world, and *are again entangled and overcome* by them, they certainly serve them, and in their servitude they experience worse things than before the knowledge, greatly aided by our adversary Satan, so that they may be dragged down to worse in repayment for their former termination from evil deeds. Therefore, the Apostle also says that since this happens to them, that they sing a retractation of evils, *it would have been better for them not to have known the truth* at all than to be captured by worse things *after they having known it*.

For since *a dog returns to its own vomit* is more abominable. For what nature had hated, and thus had compelled it to reject, this again having in delight, and as if eating those things that corrupt, and as if ejected through a miscarriage of nature, is more abominable. And the *pig* again seeking to roll *in the mud*, if it does this, will appear dirtier than the previous filth.

CHAPTER 3

Repetition of the wickedness of heretical men: in which it is also discussed how Christ will suddenly come at the end of this age: therefore it is said that one must be adorned with every virtue.

3:1-4 *I am writing to you, dear ones, in these letters, in which I stir up your sincere mind in remembrance: that you should be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior Jesus: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying: Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

From these, we learn that there are two universal letters of Peter. Furthermore, what he says, "*in which I stir up your sincere mind by way in remembrance,*" is to be understood in this way: In which letters, that is, through which letters, *I stir up the sincere mind* that is in you. For it is the nature of a sincere and pure mind to remember and be stirred up with all virtue and readiness of spirit regarding what has been heard or the useful things that have been deposited, in order to repeat the actions of these. However, these have been deposited through prophetic sayings and apostolic preachings. For this reason, Paul also says: "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets:" (Eph. 2:20) For all of them announced the coming of the Lord, both the first and the second, and it is not right to doubt such great and numerous witnesses. And what do I say, he asks, about the prophets and apostles, who announced both the first and the second coming of the Lord?

And this is how the order should be taken: *that you should be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior.* For the preposition ὑπὸ is taken from the common, that is, “by”. And why Peter should order this remembrance to be stirred up, he adds: Because those who live addicted to passions according to their own desires, seeing the coming of God, are afraid, which the Lord himself also announced along with others divinely inspired, and therefore despising their dishonorable life: then also seeing that the words do not immediately take effect, but are delayed for the salvation of many, they approach the faithful as if they were deceivers, and say:

Where is the promise of his coming? For this one, who is not yet complete due to a certain arrangement, they also distort the other beneficial teachings of the Lord, so that faith is not held by them. However, in those times, the Gnostics or Naassenes were indeed quiet, as were the Lampetians and Euchites. All of whom, Peter says, willingly do not know. For they voluntarily close their eyes to the truth, as we have said before.

3:5-9 *For they willingly do not know that the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water by the word of God: by which the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

And what is it that they do not know? That just as in the flood, the heavens were from the water according to the creation of the world narrated by Moses: (for he himself says that God commanded that a firmament be made in the midst of the waters (Gen. 1:6), that is, a firmer substance than the waters): so also the earth appeared from the waters at the command of the Creator, which had also been submerged at first. And just as the flood unexpectedly came upon the heavens and the earth constituted from water, so it has now been established that the corruption of the universe will occur through fire, with which the wicked will also perish. Since these two elements, water and fire, were created along with the universe, from which the other two elements are also derived: air indeed from the evaporated waters, but the earth from the compacted ones: namely, just as it was made from fire through evaporation and compression, with no one who has a mind objecting (for this virtue has been bestowed upon fire by God the Creator), since these two, I say, have always existed in this way, and previously the destruction of the wicked was made through water, it is necessary that the destruction of those who act wickedly will again occur through fire. Moreover, that the corruption of this universe is evident not only to Christians but also to the wise men of the Greeks, as is the case with Heraclitus of Ephesus and Empedocles of Etna¹². But someone might say: And what is the reason for its creation if the world must again be reduced to nothingness? And we will say that the world does not tend entirely towards corruption, but towards renewal; therefore, the Prophet also says: "And you will renew the face of the earth." (Ps. 103:32) For just as the creation, being from God from the beginning, was good, and not merely good by chance: through the transgression of man, the creation itself became subject to vanity, that is, not having a firm existence, but being in a state of instability and change.

Then in the flood, when few men had persevered in divine worship, the world again seemed to take on the beginning of its

reconstruction through Noah and those who had been saved in the ark along with the animals for the establishment of seeds: nevertheless, even then, human nature did not persist in its previous state, but rather declined to worse conditions than those that had existed before, from which neither the law given by Moses turned them away, nor the presence of the Lord, except that a few turned aside to those things which led to salvation. For how great is the multitude of those who are saved if you compare it to the multitude of those who perish, who are generated daily? For this reason, it seems to me that the time of fulfillment is delayed until the number of the saved is completed. Therefore, since the call to salvation has been made in various ways, and the destruction from unbelief is diverse: for this reason, a cataclysmic fire is necessary, indeed a destruction, although not entirely perfect: not indeed of souls, but neither of bodies. For we must all be revealed before the tribunal of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10), not with our souls naked, but together with our bodies, and with them incorruptible. For how could a naked soul account for those things which have been done through the body? Indeed, it is not the part of a just judge, when two have sinned in the same way, to dismiss one and transfer the whole crime to the other. Furthermore, if we are accustomed to melt certain corporeal things again with fire, not to attribute to them absolute destruction, but to provide them with purity and sincerity: let no one doubt that God, who has promised completion through fire, will either not bring about corruption, or will indeed do so in such a way that through the corruption of one, He makes another. But even if it were to corrupt, what would it corrupt? The superfluous and those related to present life: and what are those? Beasts, herbs, plants. Indeed, herbs are for the beasts, and the beasts are for the service of this corruptible life. "Producing," he says, "hay for the beasts and herbs for the service of men." (Ps. 103:14) As for the plants, some are indeed for covering and for building houses, while others are for providing food. Moreover, the fact that animals require food is

a sign of corruption. For what else could the middle and fullness provide but corruption? Therefore, those things which are superfluous to immortal life would be corrupted. But He will create new heavens and a new earth (Isa. 65:17), not another in terms of material. For even one who builds a new house does not indeed make it from non-existing material. Thus, God created the material and shaped it from the beginning, as much as was certainly necessary for the use of that time.

To the incorruptibility, however, which will corrupt that which is useless and unnecessary after the present state. If something is useful, it will allow for an improvement with immortal and incredible beauty, so as to perfect and complete another and incorruptible world.

"and the earth standing out of the water." The earth indeed from water as from a material principle, but through water as through a perfecting principle. For water contains the earth like a certain glue that is to it; unless it were to touch it, it would necessarily dissolve and be carried into the air. However, perhaps someone will approach us with vain thought saying: For what reason did God, who produced this visible world, not create it firm and unchangeable from the beginning, but subject to changes? Hence, it was also immediately necessary to be restored, indeed at the time of Noah through water, but *reserved unto fire*, as Peter now says? To which we will say that it was not possible for it to have changelessness.

How indeed, for he who has received his being from change? If indeed it was produced from non-being to being, which no wise person would say is not a change. And in what way has the change progressed to worse, mixed with worse, it was necessary for this Creator to restore it to better; indeed, at the time of Noah he purified through water, but in the end he will do so through *fire*.

Just as we are accustomed to melt certain material things again with fire, not for destruction, but for purification.

"by which," namely heaven and earth, indeed submerged by waters, but the heavens sending down their gushes, that is, as if through gushes urging water downwards. "*by which the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.*" It perished, not for the entire world, but for the living beings, which indeed represent the whole world.

If indeed the place was deserted of living beings, the world would not even be considered. Furthermore, what is stated, "*reserved for fire on the day of judgment of ungodly men,*" is thus arranged: reserved for the day of judgment and for the day of destruction; for "on the day" is resumed from common sense. However, *judgment* means condemnation:

"*The Lord is not slack.*" Having completed the discourse on the End, which will necessarily be through *fire*, all of which we have explained more fully, it transitions to the production or extension of the time until the world is ended, and says: *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise*, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient, waiting for our salvation, *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*: for certainly to him who is infinite and the sea of essence unconstrained, nothing is extended, but a *thousand years* are just like a single day with him. Or rather, according to David, there is no multiplication of days: for he says in this way: "A thousand years in your sight, O Lord, are like a day that has just gone by and like a watch in the night" (Ps. 89:4): by watch signifying the briefest span of the night. For the night is divided into four watches: since the Lord came to the holy apostles in the fourth watch. (Matt. 14:25)

3:10-14 *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless, and consider that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation.*

The uncertainty of the Lord's coming is signified as a theft, when it is least expected, through the *thief* and *the night*: through the night indeed, because of uncertainty; for all things in the night are uncertain: through *the thief*, because he is not expected; for no one will be robbed who expects a thief, but those who least expect him will be robbed. Therefore, the Lord also says that just as in the days of Noah there were men rejoicing in weddings and drinking, thinking nothing of the future calamity that would overtake them (Matt. 24:38), until the flood overwhelmed them: so too will the coming of the Lord suddenly come upon the wicked.

The word “noise” (ῥοιζήδον) indeed means *sound*. However, the sound of this kind is proper to fire in those things that are fed by fire. Note, however, that it has said the *earth* and what is in it must be *burned up*, but not men, but only destruction has been said concerning the wicked or their transgressions. For the way of the wicked will perish, but the wicked himself will not.

"According to his promise." For He promised the faithful, saying: "I will come and take you, etc. (Jn. 14:33) "In my Father's house

there are many mansions.” (Jn. 14:2) Therefore, Paul also says that, when the angel shall sound the trumpet from heaven, and the dead shall rise immortal (1 Thess. 4:15), they themselves will also meet the Lord in glory, signifying immortality by what he said about glory. But if they are immortal or incorruptible, surely they will also be new. If, however, these are new, it is evident that a new creature has been born to be changed along with the establishment of men: corruptible indeed because of the corruptible downfall of men, but incorruptible because of the renewal of men. Consider, moreover, that both the delay of time until the Lord's coming and the long-suffering expectation itself are said to effect our salvation.

3:15-18 *Just as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, speaking in almost all his letters about these things: among which are some things hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. Therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, take care that you are not led astray by the error of the wicked and fall from your own commitment, but grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

"Just as our beloved brother Paul," And where did Paul say anything of this sort? In these words when he says: "The goodness of God invites you to repentance." (Rom. 2:4) If the patience of God invites to repentance, then repentance is certainly beneficial for us, and the patience of God is for our benefit and salvation.

However, he says that the *things hard to understand* are interpreted by the wicked in a perverse way; for this means to be twisted, and to demonstrate the whole matter from one point, as Paul said, "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,"

(Rom. 5:20) they perverted this to mean that we sin more so that we may be forgiven more abundantly.

However, *they do this*, he says, *to their own destruction*. Just as those who killed the prophets and apostles are liable to the same judgment, so too are those who distort their words: for those killed them so that those who were being taught salvation by them could not be helped by them; and likewise, these *distort* the words so that no one may work salvation through them. Truly, he calls faith in the Lord its own *commitment*. And just as he concludes in his other Epistle with prayer, so in this one, he prays for an increase in faith in the Lord for them.

The end, with the help of divine favor, of the later Catholic Epistle of Peter.

Translation Footnotes

1 This section had an odd placement of a number of verses from chapter one. I am not sure if it was a copyist error or if Oecumenius actually wrote it. I simply abbreviated it.

2 Irenaeus of Lyons, Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenæus, 13

3 John Chrysostom, in his Homily 23 on Romans

4 Gregory Nazianzen, Oration 45.24

5 Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus", contained in Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers, Book X

6 Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle

7 Basil of Caesarea, Letter 155

8 Fragments of St. Justin Martyr, 4

9 For there is an ancient text called A Valentinian Exposition (150-350 A.D.), which is found in the Nag Hammadi Library, it demonstrates what

Oecumenius says here about the Valentinians fleeing into profound depths and silence, in their own words. There is an English translation by John D. Turner.

10 Tartarus, a term from Greek mythology representing a deep abyss for torment and suffering, is mentioned in the New Testament once, in 2 Peter 2:4. Besides Hades and Gehenna, we find in the New Testament many other names for the abode of the damned. Tartarus is called "lower hell" (2 Peter 2:4), "abyss" (Luke 8:31 and elsewhere), "place of torments" (Luke 16:28), "pool of fire" (Revelation 19:20 and elsewhere), "furnace of fire" (Matthew 13:42, 50), "unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12, and elsewhere), "everlasting fire" (Matthew 18:8; 25:41; Jude 7), "exterior darkness" (Matthew 7:12; 22:13; 25:30), "mist" or "storm of darkness" (2 Peter 2:17; Jude 13). The state of the damned is called "destruction" (apoleia, Philippians 3:19 and elsewhere), "perdition" (olethros, 1 Timothy 6:9), "eternal destruction" (olethros aionios, 2 Thessalonians 1:9), "corruption" (phthora, Galatians 6:8), "death" (Romans 6:21), "second death" (Revelation 2:11 and elsewhere). [Catholic Encyclopedia]

11 Sharing bread and salt is an ancient custom, prevalent in the Middle East and parts of Europe, symbolizing welcome, gratitude, friendship, and trust.

12 Heraclitus of Ephesus (5th and 6th century B.C.) is renowned for his doctrine of flux. Empedocles on Etna (494–434 B.C.)